THE JAMES CAIRD SOCIETY
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JOURNAL
Number Three

Antarctic Exploration

Sir Ernest Shackleton

APRIL 2007
John & Sue Bonham
Supporting
The James Caird Society `Journal`

Specialists in Polar Travel
Catalogue Available

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Welcome to the JCS Journal Number Three. It is my great privilege to be your new editor and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr Jan Piggott, founder-editor, for making Number One (published in May 2003) and Number Two (published in November 2004) possible. Indeed, Jan has retired from the JCS Committee in recent months and his invaluable, wise and scholarly input will be missed sorely by us all!

The intention of the Journal is to provide members of the Society with a little ‘meat’. The Society’s Newsletter, on the one hand, is always topical and informative but its intention is quite different. It is a ‘lighter’ read. The Journal, on the other hand, strives to complement the Newsletter by providing material of greater length and, where possible, originality. It seeks to educate and enlighten the polar enthusiast on matters historical and contemporary; it endeavours, also, to stimulate debate. In future editions, I hope to publish your letters - so please feel free to write to me (my address is overleaf) with your comments and observations. In this way members can interact and contribute meaningfully as we all seek to learn more about Sir Ernest and the polar world in general.

You will see from the Contents that this issue of the Journal is quite catholic in taste. In addition to the time-honoured book reviews there are essays embracing such topics as music composition using Antarctic field recordings; DH Lawrence’s ‘link’ with the Heroic Age; a brief insight into the life of Walter How and a most enlightening appraisal of the contribution to polar discovery made by Duncan Carse.

Articles include an excerpt (with introduction) from the Conservation Plan published by the Antarctic Heritage Trust (March 2003) in connection with Shackleton’s hut at Cape Royds; Sir James Wordie’s Obituary of Sir Ernest (Geographical Journal, 1922); an account of Frank Wild’s death (with introduction) (Polar Record, SPRI, 1940) and an interesting contribution written by EHS, upon his return from the Nimrod expedition, in a popular magazine (M.A.P. July 1909).

The books reviewed include: Stephen Haddelsey’s ‘Born Adventurer’ (an account of the life of Frank Bickerton); Kelly Tyler’s ‘The Lost Men’ (an account of Shackleton’s Ross Sea Party); Michael Smith’s ‘Sir James Wordie, Polar Crusader. Exploring the Arctic and Antarctic’ (an account of the life of explorer and scientist Sir James Mann Wordie) and, for the uninitiated naturalists among you, Hadoram Shirihai’s ‘A Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife’. Included, too, is a brief review of an interesting philatelic catalogue.

Of course, 2007 is a significant year as we celebrate the centenary of the Nimrod expedition (1907/09). My intention is to include an essay on this subject in the next edition (Spring 2008). Meanwhile, to whet your appetite, I have included, in the centrefold, a copy of some of the folding maps incorporated in Shackleton’s Heart of the Antarctic (Heineman,1909). The inside main covers show a copy of original BAE (Nimrod) expedition headed paper, complete with the autographs of many of the main members of the shore party. This artefact hangs proudly on my study wall.

Last, but not least, I wish to express my gratitude to John and Sue Bonham (J & SL Bonham, Antiquarian Booksellers) for their willingness to put financial faith in this publication. Without their valuable contribution the present edition of the Journal would have been a poorer relative.

Stephen Scott-Fawcett
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Shackleton’s Hut at Cape Royds, Ross Island, Antarctica.

Everyone will be aware of the sterling work being carried out by the Antarctic Heritage Trust (NZ) on Shackleton’s old hut built during the *Nimrod* Expedition (1907/9) at Cape Royds. Following the completion of detailed planning documents, conservation and restoration work commenced in the austral summer of 2004/5.

The recently published AHT Annual Report (2006) makes encouraging reading indeed. It reports, for example, that the biggest heritage field programme ever undertaken by the Trust in Antarctica was achieved during the austral summer (2005/6) with ten specialists working onsite at the various huts in the Ross Sea region. Further, with a successful 2006/07 work programme just finished, AHT is delighted that the planned work programme to secure the structure of Shackleton’s hut is as good as complete. Guided by a Conservation Plan, work undertaken by the AHT’s conservation carpenters to secure the structure included: the removal of the decaying stores from around the exterior of the hut; securing of the hut structure; laying of a new roof covering; the reconstruction of the original chimney flue and the removal of ice from under the building.

To complement the work being carried out on the hut, The Shackleton Hut Artefacts Conservation Programme was launched. In February 2006 an international team of three conservators flew to the NZ Scott Base (Ross Island) to spend the winter there, conserving the thousands of artefacts recovered from the Cape Royds hut. There is a custom-built conservation laboratory fitted with specialist equipment (See page 42). To celebrate the centenary of the British Antarctic Expedition (*Nimrod*) it is planned to have teams of summer and winter conservators working in Antarctica year-round in a bid to complete the conservation of the artefact collection in 2009.

In May 2006 the AHT received the biggest single cash donation to date (£500,000) from the estate of Mrs Audrey Dance (Northumberland). In the AHT Annual Report (2006) appreciation is extended to the executors of Mrs Dance’s estate for their foresight. The donation has provided funding necessary to complete the work programme to secure both the structure of Shackleton’s hut and the artefact collection. A capital maintenance fund for Shackleton’s hut has been created in her name. The Society, too, has played its part in raising substantial funds for the Royds hut. It was the Society’s chosen charity for two successive years.

Most people will not have had the opportunity to visit the historic huts. They are remote, cold and the cost to travel there is prohibitive. I had the good fortune to journey south in 2000 and had the extraordinary privilege of stepping into all 4 historic huts cared for by the AHT (Cape Royds hut (Ernest Shackleton’s *Nimrod* Expedition, 1907/9); Cape Evans hut (Captain Scott’s *Terra Nova* Expedition, 1910/13); Cape Adare huts (Carsten Borchgrevink’s *Southern Cross* Expedition, 1898/1900 (main hut) & Captain Scott’s *Terra Nova* Expedition, 1910/13 (remnants)).

To help set the scene for members, I reproduce here, by kind permission of the AHT, a comprehensive description of the site, hut and artefacts (together with their condition) as reported in the Conservation Plan (Section 3) in March 2003. For many, this information will be a revelation. I hope it may encourage you to think, seriously, about how you might support the work of the AHT in the Ross Sea region and, for that matter, the important work being undertaken by its sister organisation (UKAHT) both in the Ross Sea region and on the Antarctic Peninsula.

Both organisations are registered charitable trusts and donations to the UKAHT are eligible for Gift Aid. Take a look at their shared website (www.heritage-antarctica.org).
‘You can’t think what it’s like to walk over places where no man has been before.’

ERNEST SHACKLETON
3.1 Site

Cape Royds is an ice free area at the western extremity of Ross Island, approximately 40 km south of Cape Bird and 35 km north of Hut Point Peninsula. The ice free area is composed of till-covered basalt bedrock. The geographic location of the site is: Latitude: 77°33'10.7"S; Longitude: 166°10'6.5"E.

No specific research into current meteorology in the area of Cape Royds has been undertaken recently. From the meteorology undertaken at Cape Royds between 1907–09 (Kidson, E, Reports on the Scientific Investigations – Meteorology, H) Green, Government Printer, Melbourne) a general description of the weather at the time of the expedition can be given.

Maximum and minimum daily temperatures ranged from a high of 47°F on 10 December 1908 to a low of -43.5°F on 19 August 1908. There are four principal factors controlling the annual march of temperature in the McMurdo Sound:

1. Solar radiation, which reaches a maximum in December, and is negligible from April to August inclusive.
2. Radiation from the air and from the Ice Barrier and the Antarctic Continent into space.
3. The transfer of heat by air currents from lower latitudes, which is not less important because it takes place mainly at some height above the surface.
4. The supply of heat by evaporation, conduction, and radiation from the ocean, of which the temperature is nearly constant at between 28°F and 30°F.

The windiest month recorded during the British Antarctic Expedition was May 1908, in which there were four strong blizzards and one mild one, but September and October were only slightly less windy. The highest velocity recorded was 62 miles per hour (28 metres/second), which was observed twice in May 1908. Velocities of 40 miles per hour (18 metres/second) or over were fairly frequent, and were recorded in all months from March to October 1908 inclusive except June, in which the maximum recorded was 39 miles per hour (17 metres/second). There were no strong northerly winds, the highest velocity measured being 27 miles per hour (12 metres/second) on 27 July 1908.

During 1908 a very low humidity was deduced for March. The latter was a short month and it was some time before the observers settled down to the conditions, so that the result is probably inaccurate. In April, July and August (1908), supersaturation is indicated (100,146 and 128% RH), and the remaining months all show high mean humidities.

Recent recordings of relative humidity values within the hut at Cape Royds undertaken by a team from the Universities of Waikato (New Zealand) and Minnesota (USA) show average relative humidity values to be quite high, ranging from 72% to 82% and show that at times the relative humidity can rise above 90%.

The historic area encompasses the land designated as Antarctic Specially Protected Area No 27 by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (1998) and endorsed by the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). It is located to the north-east of Cape Royds, adjacent to Backdoor Bay, and is immediately to the east of the designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) No 1, an Adélie penguin rookery. Shackleton's British Antarctic Expedition 1907–09 hut is the focal point of the area, and is described in Sections 3.2 and 3.3. Other man-made features of the site are described below.

METEOROLOGICAL SCREEN

As well as the hut, the area includes one other built structure, a meteorological screen, which is sited on a low ridge to the south-west of the hut. There is also a pipe support for Mawson’s anemometer on a hill to the south-east of the hut (the stand with rubber wheel next to this item is a recent survey marker), while on a rocky ridge north-east of the hut, there is an iron pipe support for Mawson’s snow gauge.

The timber structure of the meteorological
screen is still in place and intact. It is missing the
door, and some deterioration due to wind erosion
is evident. Copper and iron alloy components,
including the base of the Robinson anemometer and
temperature probes, show deterioration as a result
of corrosion. The original box base filled with rocks
is stable, and the iron alloy of the anemometer stand
is in a stable state. Minor corrosion is evident but,
considering its age and position, the overall
condition of the screen is very good.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS
Around the site are several archaeological deposits.

1. Backdoor Bay, north-east of hut
On the edge of the beach above the tide crack are
some disintegrating boxes of Colman's flour and 11
iron alloy extensions for drills. These appear to be
at one of the places where stores were unloaded in
February 1908.

2. Terrace above Derrick Point, south-east of hut
Three caches of disintegrating stores mark the most
important of the unloading sites of February 1908.
These caches have been tidied over the years and
some material has been added to them. While the
artefacts are in very poor condition, the site has
historic and archaeological significance.

3. Rubbish dump, north-east of hut
This dump is thought to relate to the period of
occupation, 1908-09. It has been added to since
1960 and possibly earlier. It contains many
fragments, and the occasional complete artefact,
and is surrounded by kenyte boulders placed in
recent years to prevent contents being blown
around the site. The site also has archaeological
significance.

4. Beneath large kenyte boulder, east of hut
Part of a Colman's flour box and three fragments
of terra-cotta can be found at this site. During the
unloading of stores in 1908, supplies were cached at
a variety of places, and this is thought to be one of
those places.

5. Within rookery
Artefacts within the penguin rookery at the east end
of Pony Lake include a reel of sounding wire and a
provision box being used by penguins for nesting.
These are at the site of depot No 3. They are thought
to be original artefacts but are not of archaeological
significance and, without a permit, are not accessible.

6. North end of Pony Lake
Pony fences and the site of burning (1950s?) along
the shore at the north end of Pony Lake mark the
place where the ponies were tethered on arrival in
February 1908. The burning could be associated with
work parties from H.M.N.Z.S. Endeavour in the late 1950s,
although this awaits confirmation from surviving
members of the crew. This site is considered to be
of minor archaeological significance, although there
may be the remains of structures below the ground
surface.

7. Sheep skeleton, north-east of hut
About 100m north-east of the hut, at the head of
a shallow valley, is a sheep skeleton, minus the
skull, and it is uncertain how long it has been there.
It is unlikely that this site is of archaeological
significance.

The artefacts that constitute these archaeological
deposits in the wider environs of the hut are
uniformly in very poor condition, and in some cases
can be regarded as rubbish. There may, however, be
information to be gained from a careful examination
of the deposits.

TREATY PLAQUES
On a low stand on the hillside to the south-east of
the hut there are Antarctic Treaty plaques outlining
the history of the site in four languages, English,
Spanish, Russian and French. The plaques show
changes to the colouration of the surface as a
result of copper corrosion products. This type of
colouration is expected in such an environment.
The stand is made of steel and is in contact with
the copper alloy. It is painted black but is rapidly
corroding as a result of dissimilar metal corrosion
and the environment.
3.2 Hut Exterior

Shackleton's hut is the focal point of the Cape Royds Antarctic Specially Protected Area No 27, sited in an area where it is sheltered by low surrounding ridges and outcrops of volcanic kenyte. It is a conventionally framed prefabricated timber structure, rectangular in plan, supplied by Humphreys Limited, Knightsbridge, London, to specifications submitted by them dated 17 May 1907.

Dimensions given in the Humphreys\' specification describe the building as:

- 33 feet long [10,060mm], 19 feet wide [5,790mm], height to eaves 8 feet [2,440mm], height to ridge proportionate, with lean-to porch 6’0" [1,830mm] x 5’0" [1,520mm].

The building survey undertaken in January 2002 shows the overall exterior plan dimensions to be very close to those in the specification: the hut is 10,100mm long x 5,855mm wide, with the lean-to porch 1,845 x 1,590mm.

The long axis of the hut is orientated on a line some 73° east of north. The eastern end of the hut is close to ground level, while the ground falls away towards the west to reveal a small sub-floor space. The porch and door into the hut is at the west end.

The foundation of the hut is formed by a series of timber piles set into the ground, the permafrost

Above: View of the hut from the northeast with Pony Lake, penguin rookery and the Trans-Antarctic mountains beyond, 1988. PHOTO: CHRIS COCHRAN
level being close to ground level. The piles support timber 'sleeper wall plates', floor joists at approximately 350mm centres and tongue and groove flooring. From the original specification the wall framing and exterior cladding is described as:

good strong yellow deal, morticed and tenoned, so as to be easily taken down for re-erection, without injury to the structure, each joint to be plainly marked to facilitate re-erection ... The whole of the exterior walls to be covered with 1" tongued and grooved boarding. ... The whole of the Roof, Gables and Walls, and under side of verandah roof to be lined throughout with Stonflex FELT immediately under boarding. Roof to have additional layer on outside.

The external walls are simple load bearing framed walls with studs at approximately 850mm centres in the longitudinal direction and ranging from 600–950mm centres in the transverse direction. Archival record from Shackleton's Heart of the Antarctic indicates the hut "was made of stout fir timbering of best quality in walls, roofs, and floors and the parts were all morticed and tenoned ... the walls were strengthened with iron clents bolted to main posts and horizontal timbering ...". The nail pattern on the external cladding indicates two rows of nogs (dwangs) at about 800mm centres. In the absence of invasive investigation, it has not been possible to confirm the details quoted, or the current structural condition of the timber framing. Contemporary photographs from the Dunlop Collection, however, corroborate the historical record quoted above, as does some exposed framing in the porch.

WEST ELEVATION

The main feature of the west elevation is the cold porch, almost square in plan and with a lean-to roof. The external door into the porch (D1) is not original, and does not swing as the original one did, but it is in good condition. The building fabric of the porch itself and its timber cladding (vertical tongue and groove boarding), is generally in good condition. Some staining of the cladding from the copper survey marker attached during the summer of 1987–88 is evident to the south side of the door. The staining is typical of that around the whole of the hut from the seven survey markers fixed to its exterior. Metal elements appear to be in good condition.

An additional space was erected on either side of the porch, neither space being a part of the prefabricated hut. To the south, a storeroom built of "biscuit cases" stood for only a very short time before being destroyed in a blizzard; there were few traces of it in 1915.

To the north of the porch a laboratory built for the physicist Douglas Mawson survives, although this was only ever used as a storeroom. This structure is conventionally framed and clad with 1" tongue and groove boarding on its exterior face. A series of three heavy horizontal timber members have been fixed to the western elevation of this structure. The northern face of the Mawson laboratory forms one wall of the latrine enclosure.

There are a number of timber blocks fixed to the cladding of the west elevation of the hut. It is presumed that those on the south side of the porch are part of the fabric that made up Wild's store. To the north side of the porch the purpose of the three timber members that run the full width of Mawson's laboratory is less clear. They appear to trim joints in the cladding of the structure, which has been fabricated from a variety of surplus materials.

The southern end of the west elevation includes that part of the hut most elevated above the ground. Sheets of a bituminised building paper were fixed to the perimeter sub-floor framing in 1990–91 in an attempt to restrict wind-blown snow penetrating into this zone. The exposed face of the membrane has been disguised behind a built up layer of volcanic rock to a level just below the bottom of the timber cladding.

The steps which form the entrance to the hut comprise a low rock step and a high (approximately 350mm) timber supply box (with signs of material failure evident) that appears to sit on top of another
partly buried timber case. The floor level of the porch is approximately 600mm above the ground level.

**NORTH ELEVATION**

The north elevation (the north is the lee side of the hut from the prevailing winds) is clad with 61 timber tongue and groove boards (160 x 25mm) fixed vertically over a layer of roofing felt insulation; although the felt is mentioned in the original specification, it has not in fact been observed on the building. Weatherboards on this elevation are covered with sheets of flat galvanised iron (some made of opened up tins) up to a line approximately level with the centreline of the lower pane of the windows. These metal sheets were nailed to the hut cladding to protect the timber from damage by the ponies stabled here during the 1908 winter. Corrosion of the panels has caused staining of the timber cladding within the stables area, but has not otherwise affected its integrity.

At the junction of the north and east walls, there has been failure of some weatherboards due to impact damage and wind, resulting in the loss of cladding and insulation. Recent remedial work has been carried out using sealant to fill cracked or split timbers. A minor exploratory excavation was carried out at this location in an attempt to establish the position and condition of the sub-floor framing and pile. In-ground timber proved to be in sound condition. The level of permafrost was approximately 200mm below ground level.

There is evidence on this elevation which helps explain the use of the area as stables. A wrought iron hook at the north end of the east elevation held one end of a now coiled wire rope that originally ran the length of the wall, and the four Manchurian ponies were tethered along the wire. There is an abraded mark in the timber at the junction of the east and north walls indicating where the rope passed around the corner.

Removable timber shutters (not original) over the windows are in fair condition. Timber blocks provide fixing points for these panels; some detrimental effects (splitting and rust staining from the fixings) on the original building fabric where they are screwed onto the face of the weatherboards are evident.

The east window (W2) on this elevation is original and, with its associated brass hardware, is in fair condition. (All hardware was specified to be brass.) The west window (W1) was replaced in 1991–92 and has been fabricated from a timber species that differs from the original. The condition of this window and hardware is good.

**EAST ELEVATION**

The east elevation comprises 35 weatherboards fixed vertically and to the same cross section as on the other elevations. It is the least articulated of the four hut facades, the only opening being the gable end louvre which is itself now covered by the Butyleclad roof cladding. Originally, this elevation had a cache of stores built close to it, the space between the stores and the hut was filled with scoria. A wrought iron hook in good condition survives at the northern end of the elevation and is associated with the wire rope still attached to the main body of the hut on the north elevation.

A number of boards show signs of weathering and failure; typically those on the corners of the hut which are exposed to higher wind forces. On this elevation both the north and south corners have pieces of timber cladding that have split or fractured, with some loss of material evident.
SOUTH ELEVATION

The south elevation is clad, like the north elevation, with 6" tongue and groove boards fixed vertically. As for the east elevation, it originally had a cache of stores built close to it, with the space between the store boxes and the hut wall filled with scoria. The stores and store boxes have been progressively lost; successive work parties have ‘tidied’ the surviving stores, wind and the activities of skua gulls have hastened their deterioration, and their condition today is very poor. Originally, the stores comprised approximately 216 boxes on the east elevation and 384 on the south; today about 50 boxes (less than 25%) remain on the east elevation, while a similar or smaller proportion remain on the south.

The windows on the south elevation were permanently shuttered soon after erection of the hut in 1908. Some of the original shuttering of the eastern window W2 has been lost and replaced at some time with plywood, which has itself suffered some loss, leaving the bottom 300mm section of the window exposed. The window itself is, however, in good condition. The western window W4 is fully protected with firmly fixed original shuttering in good condition.

There is physical and photographic evidence (see page 9) of canvas being fixed on this and other elevations to give additional protection to the more exposed corners of the building.

Above left: Meteorological screen, nd.
PHOTO: DAVID HARKOWFIELD, HARKOWFIELD COLLECTION

Bottom left: Shackleton’s hut from the southeast, January 2001.
PHOTO: NIGEL WATSON, AHQ COLLECTION
ROOF

The roof of the hut has a distinctive gambrel or half-hipped form, where the hipped ends of the roof are finished at the ridge with a small gable. The roof is supported on three intermediate timber trusses (pinus sylvestris) located at approximately 2,500mm centres. Each of the gables has a ventilator with fixed louvres and a ventilating panel hinged at the bottom and opening inwards; the ventilator at the east gable has been covered over by the modern Butylclad roof membrane. This membrane is glue-fixed to a plywood sub-strate that has been screw-fixed to the original sarking beneath. The chimney flue rises through the roof below the gable at the eastern end.

The structure of the roof appears to be in good condition. The modern 12.5mm plywood base to the Butylclad provides a superior diaphragm to that of the original tongue and groove sarking, and it is recommended that this be retained. The roof cladding, Butylclad, is an unreinforced vulcanised butyl rubber supplied in a roll form. It was laid in the summer of 1990-91, being glue-fixed to the plywood sub-strate. While the condition of the Butylclad is excellent, the composition, extent of cover and the colour of this element is not in keeping with the qualities of the original canvas roof covering.

The Butylclad has timber battens glue-fixed in a configuration that closely matches the original set out. The adhesion of the timber battens shows signs of failure, while the battens themselves show signs typical of exposure to the Antarctic environment including shrinkage; bowing and warping; the abrasive effects of wind; and defibration.

The structural condition of the nail fixings in the roof and wall diaphragms, and the structural fixings in the foundation structure, cannot be evaluated without invasive investigation.

The flue is in good condition, having undergone conservation treatment in 1998. It is somewhat shorter than its original form, the balance of the original flue currently lying in the stables area near the north east corner of the hut; it was originally secured by guy wires that have been removed. Movement of the flue was discovered during the 2002 survey of the hut, which suggests some form of break within the ceiling cavity. Reinstatement of the original stabilising guys to the flue should be carried out. A proprietary ‘boot’ flashing has been fitted at the junction of the roof and flue which, notwithstanding the observed movement of the flue, is in excellent condition.

OTHER FEATURES

A pair of 17.5mm diameter wire holding-down cables have been laid diagonally across the roof and secured to timber deadmen frozen into the permafrost; they are not mechanically attached to the building. The cables have been replaced, but they follow the original configuration shown in the early photographs. The cables provide resistance to wind uplift forces on the roof structure, while the modern plywood sarking under the Butylclad provides a reliable structural diaphragm to the roof.

The condition of the holding-down cables and their respective anchor points is sound, with surface corrosion noted. The typical configuration of the connection to the in-ground anchor is a series of paired U-bolts, a turnbuckle, with further paired U-bolts fixing the primary 17.5mm cable to the anchor cable (typically two 20mm cables) secured to a timber deadman buried within the permafrost. There is some localised crushing to the timber deadman at the south-east anchor point.

Other surviving original features of the hut described in the specification include:

‘Special double casement windows, well seasoned . . . ; the windows to open for ventilation and supplied with good clear glass . . .’. The windows on the south wall have had permanent shutters fixed over them, while the west window on the north elevation (W1) has been replaced with a modern replica using a different timber species from the original. Removable timber
shutters (not original) protect the windows on the north elevation when the hut is not being visited. Timber blocks provide positioning and fixing for these panels; they are screwed onto timber blocks fixed to the face of the weatherboards.

Doors – Both doors to be 6'8" [2,032mm] x 2'8" [814mm] x 1/4" [44mm] fitted in solid frames . . . . The existing outer door (D1) is a framed door and is not original; it does not match the inner (original) door, (D2), which is a four-panelled door.

Ventilation – Ventilation to be provided by special louvre vents in gable ends, with cords and fasteners. The louvre vent at the west end survives exposed while the vent at the east end has been covered over with the new Butyl clad roof cladding. This is because the louvres in this vent were found to be broken during the 1990–91 work, and it was therefore covered over to make it snow proof.

The hut was structurally sound when inspected by members of the AHT field team in January 2002. External degradation observed includes abrasion of the timber cladding by wind-blown ice and scoria, some local splitting of the cladding timber, and ultraviolet degradation of roof and wall claddings. There are rust stains below nails fixing the external cladding, which indicates corrosion, and which is likely to have reduced nail strength. Internal floor damage includes significant abrasion from the scoria brought into the hut on heavy boots, despite boot brushes being installed by AHT.

External building levels taken on a regular basis since 1988–89 show slight variation, but do not indicate significant building movement. Internal floor levels have not been monitored for ice heave under the floor, although ice heave does not appear to be a problem.

The loss of structures built against the walls of the hut, including Wild's storeroom, the stable block and the walls of store boxes to the south and east elevations, has resulted in increased exposure of original building elements. Notwithstanding these losses the fabric of the external walls is in relatively sound condition, the colour and patina being typical of long-term exposure to the elements. There are isolated areas of failure in individual boards, primarily at the more exposed corners of the building. Where timber is exposed to in-ground conditions it appears to be in sound condition.

STABLES AND GARAGE

The stables and garage block were built onto the north side of the hut using store boxes, bales of fodder and sundry pieces of timber; they were clad in canvas. Such makeshift construction did not survive long, and these additions to the building have been in derelict condition for a long time. The surviving fabric is in poor condition. A single timber rafter survives in situ in the stables area, and with blocks on the wall of the hut, provides vital information concerning the dimensional characteristics of the stables roof. To the west of this rafter and associated post are the remains of a second post that has been cut down at ground level.

Successive work parties have 'tidied' the surviving material forming the stables and garage, disposing of some of it and partially rebuilding collapsed walls with elements that were still in good condition. This means that the plan layout of the ancillary structures is still coherent. However, the loss of fabric that made up the stables and garage walls has been extensive. The east wall of the stables was originally 120 boxes, and is now 26 (22% remaining), while there were 48 bales of fodder, now reduced to 12 (or 25% of the original material). The south wall of the garage was originally 140 boxes, and is now 27 (19% remaining); the east wall was 50 boxes, now 14 (28% remaining), while the north wall was 120 boxes, and is now 18 (15% remaining).

Close examination of wood from the stables area near the hut has revealed extensive soft rot decay in wood that is in contact with the ground. The wet condition of the soil and high concentration of penguin guano in this area has enabled the fungus to degrade the wood slowly over many decades during the summer months.
LATRINE

The latrine was likewise a makeshift structure of timber and canvas. It survives today as an unclad frame, which, with fragments of canvas, is in poor condition. The space still has its original toilet seat and supporting structure, in fair condition. It is thought that the space beneath the seat contained a box or can which was regularly emptied, there being no evidence of a pit (which would be difficult to dig in the permafrost anyway). The lack of a more permanent structure for the latrine is a characteristic shared with other huts of the heroic era.

TIMBERS

Timber species from 44 locations throughout the hut and associated structures have been identified, and can be summarised as follows:

Picea sp (Spruce, called 'stout fir' by Shackleton)
  - Exterior cladding
  - Windows
  - Interior wall and ceiling lining
  - Floor

Pinus sylvestris (Scots Pine)
  - Fascia boards
  - Interior architraves
  - Inner door (D2), and frame
  - Beam on Shackleton's room door
  - Meteorological station

Abies sp (Fir)
  - Kennels
  - Latrine timbers
  - Beam between stables and garage
  - Storage boxes

Betula (Birch)
  - Venesta boxes (3-ply plywood)

Ulmus sp
  - Venesta boxes (garage)

Hardwood
  - Small slats, window W2
  - Mawson's lab, door Jamb

3.3 Hut Interior

THE COLD PORCH

The cold porch offers the only access to the building and forms an air lock between the outside and the main interior hut space. The space measures 1,685mm (east/west) x 1,420mm (north/south). The porch is lined on the south wall, while the other walls were left unlined. As well as the outside door D1, the porch has a door into the main interior space of the hut D2, and an opening (simply a gap between the studs with the lining left off) on the north side with three steps down into Mawson's laboratory.

The general structure of the cold porch, including its floor, is in good condition. There is no lining to the timber frame separating the porch from Mawson's laboratory, although timber cladding has been fixed vertically to part of the laboratory face of this wall. Horizontally run matched lining (similar to that used within the main hut space) has been fixed to the south wall and is in fair condition. There is evidence of localised buckling which may be due to failure of the nail fixings.

The east wall features the original solid timber four-panelled door, D2, which, with its hardware, is in good condition. Around the upper sections of the doorframe are remnants of felt lining fixed to the wall, and although this appears to improve the insulation of the wall, there is no evidence of any draught-proofing of the door. On the western wall of this space the original outer door D1 has been replaced and is in fair condition. Vertical timber lining matching the exterior cladding has been fixed to the wall on either side of this door and is in fair condition.

For more images see Pages 41 & 42.
MAWSON'S LABORATORY

This space was built shortly after the construction of the main hut. Makeshift framing formed the north and west walls, while the south and east walls are the external walls of the porch and hut respectively. Mawson’s laboratory was not lined on its outside walls and it did not have a floor. It was consequently too cold for scientific work and was used solely as a storeroom; it is used today for storage of hut maintenance equipment. This area is in poor condition as a result of its ad hoc construction.

THE MAIN ROOM

The interior of the hut is divided into three principle spaces, the main room, Shackleton’s room, and the darkroom.

The main room measures 9.850 x 5.600mm. The flooring is 165 x 25mm tongue and groove boards (Picea – Spruce) laid longitudinally down the hut. There are 34 floorboards across the width of the hut, fixed with nails to timber floor joists that are spaced at about 350mm centres. The walls are lined with 131 x 14mm tongue and groove matched lining (Picea – Spruce) run horizontally and nailed to the studs. There are 20 boards from floor level to the junction with the ceiling. The wall cavity is insulated with granulated cork, the grains approximately 3mm in diameter. Examination through cracks in the external wall cladding indicates some granular cork insulation still in place, but there are no signs of the roofing felt mentioned in the specification. The ceiling is lined with the same tongue and groove boards as on the walls. Seventy-two boards, attached directly to the underside of the purlins, span between the top of the wall and the ridge of the roof. Three timber trusses (Pinus sylvestris) with iron tie rods span the width of the hut and are secured to the wall frame with wrought iron cleats and bolts. No finish was applied to interior timbers (although Marston and Day stained some venesta boxes, and Adams and Marshall stained the walls of their cubicle with “Condy’s Fluid”).

PHOTO: CHRIS COGHAN
The space includes the Columbian Stoveworks ‘Mrs Sam’ stove at the eastern end; at the western end there is a Drummond’s acetylene gas generator supported on a timber frame 1,800mm above floor level between Shackleton’s room and the darkroom. Windows on the south walls were permanently shuttered externally and lined on the interior face with boards that line with the interior wall lining. A timber moulding frames the window, masking the joint with the wall lining. Windows on the north elevation are unobstructed pairs of two-leaved two-light casement windows, the glazing fixed with timber beads. There is no evidence of draught-proofing of the sashes.

The timber floor is in sound condition. Metal panels nailed to the floor around the Mrs Sam stove are generally sound but some movement detected in the fixing system may result in the deterioration of their current condition. These panels were probably fixed in 1916 to prevent damage to the flooring; they have axe marks that are consistent with the splitting of firewood.

The wall lining to all walls is generally in excellent condition. There are some isolated instances where shrinkage has occurred, particularly on the north wall. The same material on the ceiling is generally in good condition, although in the north-west and south-west corners, a number of boards have been broken and the ceiling cavity can be seen.

The timber trusses, their wrought iron tie rods and wall brackets, appear in excellent condition.

**SHACKLETON’S ROOM**

Shackleton’s room, in the south west corner of the main hut space, is an area measuring 2,280 x 1,760mm in plan. It is bounded by partition walls made of vertical matched lining as per the main room, but with no framing, and it is lined with the original canvas. The space has a ceiling 2,260mm above the hut floor which provided a platform for storage, accessible from the main room. It is made up of two layers of timber boards: 160 x 25mm boards running parallel with the long axis of the hut, with an upper layer of 130 x 14mm boards laid at right angles to them.

**DARKROOM**

The darkroom, in the north west corner of the main hut space, is an area measuring approximately 1,925 x 1,260mm in plan bounded by partition walls of provision cases orientated so that their contents of bottled fruit could be removed as required without demolishing the wall they formed. The interior of the darkroom, including the ceiling (at 2,260mm above floor level) is lined with surplus roofing felt. The ceiling over the darkroom is composed of the same timber members as are found in the ceiling of Shackleton’s room. The topside of the ceiling platform was used for storage.

All surviving elements of the fabric of Shackleton’s room and the darkroom appear to be in good condition.
3.4 Artefacts Outside

This section gives a general description of the artefacts associated with the site. It summarises information in AHT’s Artefact Inventory, which includes a description of all artefacts, photographs of most of them, and an assessment of their condition. The Inventory was prepared during the summer work programmes of 1995–96 to the present.

SOUTH AND EAST WALLS

Venesta boxes containing canned food and jars of salt are stacked along the south and east walls of the hut. The cans are very deteriorated from corrosion and the contents are leaking from them. The most vulnerable have been removed to the AHT container at Scott Base. Venesta boxes have delaminated, while moisture entering the jars of salt has led to discoloration of labels, freezing and some breakage. These provisions constitute an environmental hazard to local wildlife.

STABLES

The stables contain, at the east end, bales of fodder, four feed boxes, and venesta store boxes, filled with corn, which are now falling apart. At the west end there are feed boxes, a table top, and numerous pieces of iron alloy leaning against the wall of the hut—all of which are in various stages of corrosion. A wire rope for tethering the ponies is coiled behind the latrine.

The bales of fodder were wrapped in scrim and bound with wire. They have been held in place by being weighted down with boxes filled with rocks, and by the building of a rock wall at the north-east end. However, the walling has not stopped penguins seeking shelter in this area. The scrim and the wire used for binding have both deteriorated to the point of being ineffective. The bales are also weathered at the edges by windblown scoria and scratched by penguins climbing onto them.

The boxes filled with corn are now falling apart. The process of deterioration is three fold. Because the timber boxes are metal-lined, moisture gets into the box, corrosion begins, the corn gets wet and expands. Then the outside of the box corrodes, becomes weak and breaks, putting pressure on the wooden crate. Finally this breaks and the contents flow out.

The condition of the feed boxes varies from complete and in original condition (weathered and worn but stable) to falling apart. Those falling apart are doing so because the expansion of corroding nails and screws is splitting the timber. The iron alloy metal hangers that hold the boxes are showing minor surface corrosion in places, but are generally quite stable.

The numerous pieces of iron alloys leaning against, or hanging from the table top wall at the west end of the stables, are all showing various stages of corrosion. Corrosion on the oceanographic dredge has accelerated in the last 25 years and the name DAVID in white paint, is now difficult to recognise.

The two dog kennels next to the fodder bales on the northern side of the stables are firmly attached in the permafrost, but are still in a complete state. Nails and screws show some minor deterioration, and there is some cupping and splitting of the timbers. It is not known how many dog kennels there were originally (there were nine dogs), and it is almost certain that the kennels were made up on site.

GARAGE

The garage, on the north side of the stables, has a wide array of artefacts, including a wheel and rim plates from the New Arrol-Johnson motor car,19 and various metal spikes and other componentry. As a result of the New Arrol-Johnson wheel being recovered from Pony Lake and then being left exposed to the elements, its condition is structurally poor. The iron alloy section is corroding and the copper alloy shows evidence of corrosion. The timber elements have deteriorated badly to the point that decay and defibration (see reference 12) has set in with extensive damage. The metal spikes and other componentry are in various states of corrosion.
The walls of the garage are built of timber and venesta boxes and bales of fodder. The boxes have weathered, although one box containing cans of oil is in excellent condition; the areas where the oil has soaked into the timber appears to have preserved it from the elements. Some boxes are badly stained from leaking oil.

**LATRINE**

The latrine includes a mixture of cast iron and steel items ranging from an oceanographic dredge, shoes for attachment to sledge runners, snatch block, fixing clamps, remnants of the canvas cover of the latrine structure, and there is a pair of long-handled tongs hanging on the railing. The assortment of artefacts all exhibit signs of minor corrosion, but all have substantial parent metal.

**3.5 Artefacts Inside**

The artefacts inside the hut consist of many types of objects. These are positioned on shelves, in boxes, hanging on hooks, on top of beds and on the walls and floor.

The metal objects vary in type from iron alloys (steel, cast and wrought iron), copper alloys (copper, brass and bronze), aluminium and galvanised iron. Of these some have coatings such as paint or enamel. There are wooden and textile objects and other composite items containing copper and iron components. Objects mainly of leather, consist of pony tack, harnesses for dogs, and boots. On the walls are portraits of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, a print from a painting, posters and various papers.

These artefacts display a wide range of conditions from stable to poor. The condition of the textiles, leather, and paper artefacts also varies. All are fragile and stained to some degree, mostly by contact with metal fittings.
COLD PORCH

The cold porch includes a variety of objects – a wood panel saw, bolt cutters, an assortment of brackets and bolts, and a copper survey pin. On the south side are boots, dog harness, chain and spike, an iron swivel, and some wiring in lead sheath.

The variety of objects are in all stages of corrosion. The copper alloy components of the dog harness are quite stable.

MAWSON’S LABORATORY

Mawson’s laboratory has a shelf with packets of candles, some food items, a board with Shackleton’s signature, drills, and tools including shovels, picks and rigging blocks. There is a timber support for a bench or instrument.

The packets of candles have damp and torn paper wrappers. Tools, rigging blocks and coring and drill bits are in various stages of corrosion.

MAIN ROOM

Through into the main room from the cold porch door, the acetylene gas generator and gas light occupies the space above the door. Nearby are various types of iron alloy tools in make-shift venesta box shelves, also lead components, petrol tins, and tins of Jeyes disinfectant powder. Other artefacts include ceramic and glass objects, bullet cartridge cases, lamp components, a roll of wire, clothing, footwear, canned and bottled provisions, supply boxes and venesta boxes, a badly corroded tray, and bottles of fluids and powder.

Along the north wall there are beds with wire mesh supports, with mattresses, blankets and fur sleeping bags. There are shoes and boots beneath the beds, a shelf with reams of printing paper and tubes of printing ink, graffiti on the wall, and tea towels attached to and hanging from a shelf.

The stove area includes the Mrs Sam stove, pots, pans, boiler, frying pans, grillers, wood frames for canvas baths, with earthenware crocks at each end of the stove. In front of the stove, there are improvised wooden beds (one with a head board and Shackleton’s name twice) with a canvas partition behind.

The area known as Murray’s biology laboratory, behind the stove, includes a set of blue and white enamelware, glassware, and a damaged bentwood stool. There is a hessian screen behind the stove and a sleeping area in the north-east corner of the hut.

The pantry and galley area has a number of utensils, and canned and bottled food on shelves with metal support brackets. Meat hooks, enamel jugs, pans, other cooking utensils and hams hang in this area; there is also a side of bacon, tins of biscuits, timber and venesta boxes, and part of a Nansen cooker.

Along the south wall there is a wooden bed with boots and shoes beneath, graffiti, venesta box shelves with tins and bottles of food, bottles with medical supplies, a case with tins of motor lubricant, and a protective frame.

On the outer wall of Shackleton’s room are harnesses, leather equipment and a hurricane lamp, while on the floor are timber petrol boxes and a copper alloy tank. Hanging from the roof of the hut there are iron hangers: eight long ones that appear to have supported the wires for the duck partitions to the cubicles (fragments of the duck remain), and three short ones that may have been used to support the table when it was hoisted out of the way (the fourth bracket now missing). There is flexible metal tubing for acetylene for the lighting system fixed to the roof timbers. The acetylene plant itself is in good condition. The painted surface has broken down in some areas and deterioration of the iron alloy surface is evident; this is particularly noticeable on the filler tank and other iron alloy elements attached to the vessel and operating unit. The interior of the water vessel is scaled and an oil residue in the form of sludge is on the bottom. The containers that hold the carbide are mildly corroded. The original gas light is in good condition. The iron alloy tools are in various states of corrosion; petrol tins and tins of Jeyes disinfectant powder are mostly in good condition, but some are poor and deteriorating.
Elsewhere in the main room, ceramic and glass objects are partly broken and dirty and need general repairs and cleaning. Bullet cartridge cases, lamp components, roll of wire and pulleys are in fair condition.

Of the objects along the north wall, the bed mesh and legs are corroded with the base sections badly corroded. The mattresses and sleeping bags are in fair condition having been stabilised during the 1999 season. Reams of paper are still in original wrappers and stained from dampness when outside. Tea towels hanging from shelves are dirty.

In the stove area, the stove itself was given a coat of varnish in 1972. There is now evidence of corrosion on the rear and inside the ovens and fire box, and a crack is evident in the body of the casting. Pots, frying pans, a boiler and grillers are all corroding. The metal panels on the floor from the outer north wall of the stable show minor areas of deterioration.

In Murray’s biology laboratory, remedial conservation has been undertaken on the hessian screen. The condition of kitchen utensils varies greatly—some are in a very poor state (with active iron corrosion and chips) while others have dirt and grime but are quite stable. Many were recovered from Pony Lake by caretaking parties in the early 1970s, and can be identified from reports held by AHT.

Cans in the pantry and galley area are in a wide range of conditions. Most of the leaking cans have
been removed to the container at Scott Base. Some of the support brackets for shelves are showing minor corrosion, while the aluminium components of the Nansen cooker shows mild corrosion on the outside, and surface dirt.

Along the south wall, bottles and jars with provisions and medicines are in fair condition. There is concern over the potential failure of the nails and screws holding the shelves improvised from venesta boxes on the walls.

The boots and shelves beneath the bed require stabilisation treatment and internal support for the shoes. Surfaces of iron components are actively corroding. The cans of lubricant are in excellent condition.

On the outer wall of Shackleton’s room, the leather components of the equipment are still flexible. The metal components, both copper and iron alloys, show deterioration. Some of this can be related to leather dressings used and, for others, to their use. The glass of the kerosene hurricane lamp is dirty and there is some corrosion to metal components. Timber boxes on the floor are in good condition and the copper alloy tank has some corrosion.

A pulley block and iron brackets, hanging from the rafters, appear in a corroded but stable state. Flexible metal tubes associated with the gas plant are corroded. Three sledges show some deterioration to wood and metal components.

SHACKLETON’S ROOM

Shackleton’s room has cans of food on recently made (1936–37) shelving, canvas wall coverings, a copper alloy coat hook, and a box shelf on the wall. Above Shackleton’s room (and above the darkroom) are sledges, canisters of carbide, a frame and bamboo handle for a plankton net, and boards made from venesta boxes.

The can collection in this room is in a stable condition. The room itself is in very good condition. Conservation work has been carried out on the canvas wall covering that has had red ink spilled on it post 1909. The copper alloy coat hook is in good condition. The two sledges are in varying condition, with the fittings corroded but in a stable state. Cardboard canisters containing carbide appear to be sound.

DARKROOM

The darkroom has trays of copper alloy objects, scientific glass equipment extending from the roof, cases of tinned food, and a leatherette door panel. Moirs gooseberry bottles and cans of food occupy shelving outside the darkroom.

The trays of copper alloy and objects of iron are badly corroded. The leatherette door panel is still flexible, while the scientific glassware is dirty but sound. Outside the darkroom, the Moirs gooseberry bottles are leaking. Unstable cans have been moved to the AHT container at Scott Base.

5 It is probably more accurate to describe the but as pre-cut rather than prefabricated, since logistical difficulties in handling and stowage would preclude the pre-assembly of large elements such as trusses. It is likely that all framing members were pre-cut with formed joints and numbered; that flooring, cladding and lining boards were supplied cut to length, and that windows and doors were supplied in frames ready to install. It is known that some cutting and fitting was required, presumably of lining boards.
6 La Trobe University Library, Melbourne, Davis Collection, ms 3231/5.
7 Shackleton, op cit.
8 The Dunlop Collection is material gathered by Harry Dunlop, first engineer on Nimrod, and made available by Judge Appleton in the United Kingdom.
9 ibid, note 2.
10 For documentation of this work, refer to Feeney, 1996.
11 ibid, note 2.
13 The cut itself was returned to London, where it was driven about the city; a search is presently underway to locate the vehicle.
John Robert Francis (Frank) Wild (1873-1939)

The Polar Record (edited by Frank Debenham, SPRI) Volume 3, Number 19, January 1940, contains a moving, albeit brief, obituary to Frank Wild (see below). Without question, Wild was a man, like Shackleton, who endeared himself to all who knew him, in particular the rank and file of the polar expeditionary community. His polar CV is impressive.

- Able seaman *Discovery* 1901-04.
- In charge of provisions *Nimrod* 1907-09
- Sledge-master Australian Antarctic Expedition (under Mawson) 1911-13
- Second in command *Endurance* 1914-17
- Second in command *Quest* 1921-22

Very much the 'unknown giant' of the Heroic Age, Wild was there at the outset of pioneering Antarctic adventure in 1901 and was still going strong 20 years later. In fact, no other explorer spent so long in Antarctica. Though often understood as Shackleton's 'right hand man' and 'loyal lieutenant', Frank Wild was much more than this. He was a man's man. According to Douglas Mawson, he first met Wild in New Zealand during the *Nimrod* expedition being carried out of an hotel while drunk!

Wild was with Shackleton when, in January 1909, they manhauled up the Beardmore Glacier and got to within 97 miles of the Pole before (courageously) turning back. Under Mawson, in 1911-13, Wild was in command of the Western Base and explored, for the first time, Queen Mary Land.

Perhaps most significantly, it was Wild who was left in charge of the men left behind on Elephant Island during the *Endurance* saga. For 4 months he successfully kept his marooned men active and positive-minded as the Boss sought salvation across the storm-tossed Weddell Sea on the *James Caird*.

Born in Skelton (Yorkshire), at the age of 16 (1889) he joined the Merchant Navy, transferring to the Royal Navy in 1900. Upon his return in 1917 from his *Endurance* adventures, Wild saw service in Russia with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

When the Great War ended, the Yorkshireman decided farming in South Africa was for him. Even so, Shackleton later managed to entice him away from his farm to be his
Number Two on the *Quest* expedition. He was the right man in the right place to deal with the devastating consequences of Shackleton’s untimely death, on the outward journey to Antarctica. After Shackleton’s interment on South Georgia, Wild ensured that the expedition continued. The Shackleton-Rowett expedition achieved some reasonable geographical and scientific successes.

In 1922, Wild returned to farming and South Africa. He died in that country on 19th August 1939. Amongst his many awards (for advancing geography/polar exploration) he was made a Freeman of the City of London (1923).

This is what James Wordie had to say in the Polar Record in 1940, in a tribute to the little man from Skelton:

**FRANK WILD**

Frank Wild’s death must have been the first thought of Antarctic men meeting each other this winter. Apart from the leaders, no other Antarctic figure has so impressed himself on so many of the rank and file as Wild; for he had been a member of no less than five great expeditions, second in command on the later ones, but on all, whether in high position or not, acting as the guide and instructor to those new to Antarctic work.

Wild’s father had been a schoolmaster in Yorkshire, and his mother was, I think, a collateral descendant of Captain Cook. He was born in 1874 and his first sea experience was in the merchant service. His chance came when he transferred to the Royal Navy as a rating, and as an A.B. joined Scott’s first expedition on the *Discovery* in 1901. Wild was not on the main southern journey, but from the start he made his mark, and Scott wrote after Vince’s death: “It was not until I had selected Wild, as obviously the most cool and collected of the party, and called him aside, that I was able to get an idea of what had happened.” These firm words give a vivid picture of Scott and Wild together, and the whole incident sounds very typical of these two men. Later Wild was a member of Armitage’s party on a September depot journey to the west, and took part in the long journey when Armitage reached the Plateau.

I find no record of Shackleton and Wild having been associated together on sledge journeys in *Discovery* days. Shackleton, however, must certainly have known his man, and he picked Wild as a sledge expert when he took him on his own expedition south in the *Nimrod* in 1907. Wild was in his prime, and was on the main journey, the greatest of all sledge journeys—rivalled perhaps only by Scott’s supreme effort with Evans and Lashley—when Shackleton, Adams, Marshall and Wild broke the farthest south record by some 360 miles. This was the biggest single advance that has ever been made towards either Pole, and moreover, included the discovery of the immense Beardmore Glacier and a long stretch over the Plateau, then shown to reach to the South Pole, less than 100 miles beyond. This was Wild’s greatest feat, and his work there formed an unbreakable bond between him and his leader. Shackleton’s action, too, had cemented the bond, for one day he gave part of his ration to Wild, as Wild records in his diary; they were almost in, and Wild knew that such a sacrifice would have been beyond his own powers.

On Mawson’s expedition, Wild took command of an independent unit at a base in Queen Mary Land, making numerous sledge journeys, discovering the Denman Glacier, and revisiting Gaussberg. Then came the *Endurance* expedition to the Weddell Sea in 1914, with Wild as second in command. This was Wild’s first experience with dogs, and he was the best of the dog-drivers, achieving success without the whip but by sheer personality. Wild steered the *James Caird* in the
open-boat journey to Elephant Island. He would have been first choice for the long boat journey to South Georgia, but instead it fell to him to remain on Elephant Island, for Shackleton had picked his man as certain to hold together a weakened party on shortened rations.

On returning to this country in 1916, Wild took a commission in the Navy, and acted as transport officer on the North Russian front. In 1918-19 he wintered in Spitsbergen. Soon afterwards in 1920 he went on a farming adventure to Nyasaland, but returned to join Shackleton on the *Quest* in 1921. After the leader’s death in South Georgia Wild took command and explored towards what is now called Queen Maud Land.

This was the end of Wild’s exploring days. He had been awarded the Patron’s medal of the Royal Geographical Society and was by now nearly fifty years of age. He returned to Africa in 1922 (this time to Swaziland) but farming was not his real calling and he moved to Johannesburg where he died last August.

His friends have often wished, in these later years, to have had him with them again but his preference was to stay in Africa. I doubt if Wild ever was the same after Shackleton’s death. His great days were on the polar journey and in the escape from the Weddell Sea ice. No one was more liked and loved and his attraction, apart from his feats, lay partly in his simple, confiding nature and in his being the complete confidence-giving companion, without fear.

J.M.W.
IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH.

MY FIRST SUCCESS.

No. 572.—LIEUTENANT SHACKLETON.

It is with no ordinary pleasure that I welcome, this week, Lieutenant E. H. Shackleton among those who have consented to be interviewed for “ My First Success” series. His achievement is so immensely gratifying to British pride and patriotism that he was bound to become, as he has, the popular hero of the hour. “ Never,” writes my representative who did the interviewing, “ have I had a more difficult task than to induce Lieutenant Shackleton to talk about himself: He was quite willing to discuss many problems of life, to argue metaphysical and other subjects, but he was more than reluctant to go into the personal element of the expedition which has crowned him with fame, and given him an enduring place among the great explorers of the world.”

I really do not know anything of a first success, though I am quite well aware that the people who have been good enough to concern themselves with my work—would consider that I ought to regard my Antarctic expedition in that light. And, indeed, I feel that it has been successful, but it was not the work of a moment. Success in an expedition of that sort can only be gained by two great forces. The first of these is attention to detail and organisation, and the second to the co-operation of good men. The good men certainly had with me, so that if the expedition is my first success, they share it with me.

What is Success?

All success, however, has its limitations, and a man may do good work without of necessity considering that it is a “First” success. For my own part, I believe that when a man begins his life-work young, and has the definite carrying-out of an object in view for which he feels fitted, his success must come gradually and be quite unlike that indefinite thing which is the result, say, of putting one’s money on a race-horse or into a gold mine and saying that that speculation or investment was one’s first success.

With Captain Scott.

I know that the expedition has been successful, but I should be inclined to say that my first success came when I read in the Geographical Journal that the National Antarctic expedition was going to start. I mean the first expedition which went out under the command of Captain Scott. At that time I was on board a troopship conveying troops to South Africa. During a period of eight or nine months, whenever I returned home, I tried to become a member of that expedition.

An Explorer from Boyhood.

Eventually, as you know, my application was accepted, and I was taken on. As you ask, I may tell you if it was no new-born or sudden desire, for I have always been interested in Polar exploration. I can date my first interest in the subject to the time when I was about ten. So great was my interest that I had read almost everything about North and South Polar exploration.

As a Sailor.

When, therefore, this opportunity of going with Captain Scott presented itself, I naturally tried to take advantage of it. One thing in my favour was that I had been a sailor since I was sixteen. I had been all over the world in all sorts of ships—sailing ships, tramp steamers, troopships, mail-boats, ships carrying submarine cable, and so on. I had, in fact, been round the world four times, and could also claim to know something of navigation, having navigated a tramp steamer twice round the world.

Early Sea Days.

In my early seafaring days I had learnt to handle boats on the coast of Chili, where we had to go through the surf, which was very heavy, and where the rocks were very dangerous. This experience I found very useful when, in the middle of the night on March 11th, 1902, I had to take a boat to find a party of our men who had been lost in a blizzard. We set out in the middle of the night, with a very cold temperature, and the sea all massed up with broken ice.

Writing a Book.

In connection with my South African troopship work, it may interest you to know that I made my first plunge into literary work by writing a book on the transport service. It was called “O.H.M.S.” and it had a practical bearing on my life, and I may, therefore, refer to it here in this very personal record which I make under a certain feeling not of compulsion, yet of regard for the firm which publishes M.A.P. The public will readily understand what this feeling is when I explain certain facts.

I was selected to go on the Southern journey towards the barrier with Captain Scott and Captain Wilson, when we were away for ninety-three days and reached the most southerly point up to that time. Scourvy broke out and affected me so badly that I was invalided home. I should like to pause here for a moment to set right a matter which has often been wrongly written about.

An Error Corrected.

Certain papers have said that on the return journey I was hauled back on the sledge. This is not so. I was very much “knocked out,” and it was always on the cards that I should not get through. In spite of my illness, however, I managed to march back. I could not pull my load, and so could not ease the burden of my comrades.

This time, on my own expedition, except for an attack of dysentery and heart failure, from the effects of falling, one night, on a glacier. I was absolutely all right and as fit as could be when I got to the end of the journey, though I had lost three stones in weight from the time I had set out. In that, however, I was not singular, for every one of the men with me also lost weight.

A Sub-Editor.

After I was invalided home, I became assistant editor of the Royal Magazine, which is published by Messrs. Pearson, who also publish M.A.P., and it is this feeling of loyalty to the firm I served which has overcome my scruples about talking of such a thing as personal success. After leaving Messrs. Pearson, I was appointed secretary and treasurer of the Royal Scotch Geographical Society. I, however, gave up this post on being asked to contest Dundee at the last General Election. It was a forlorn hope, but was amusing in many ways, for the Dundee people are noted hecklers. Throughout the whole of the contest I received the utmost courtesy from the opposite side.

Electioneering.

On one occasion when I had to address a meeting I missed my train, and had to take a special to get through. I arrived at the hall just in time to hear the chairman apologising for my absence. I, however, made my speech. What my opponents thought of it was voiced by one of them, who got up and said: “He took a special train to get here, and when he got here what did he say? Nothing.”

I need scarcely remind you that I was defeated, and I became personal assistant to Mr. William Beadmore, the head of the firm of great armour-plate makers and battleship
Financing the Expedition.

The financing of the expedition was no easy matter, and getting the money for it might almost be regarded as my first success. I wore out a good deal of shoe-leather in London and elsewhere, going to see people, and I spent many postage-stamps in writing letters to get others to help the new expedition. I, however, obtained little assistance from most of those to whom I applied. I was sufficiently fortunate, however, to find enough people to believe in me and to guarantee me a large part of the money required for the enterprise. These guarantees will now be paid off by me. This, I hope, will be done by my lectures and by the sale of my book which will be published later in the year.

Australian Generosity.

Some other money I obtained from relations and friends, but the only public assistance I received were sums of £5,000 from the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia, and £1,000 from the New Zealand Government. In addition to the £1,000, the New Zealand Government paid half the towage of the Nimrod from New Zealand to the ice, and gave free port dues and every possible assistance to the expedition. The interest and enthusiasm displayed in Australia and New Zealand towards our work were among the most marked features of the whole expedition, and we who took part in it will never cease to appreciate them.

The Start.

On these guarantees and the funds I have mentioned, I opened a little office in London, and, with the assistance of one man, Mr. Alfred Reid, I set about preparing the expedition. Having the equipment in our own hands and not having to wait for committees, we naturally got ahead very quickly. The formal announcement that the Antarctic expedition was to start was made on February 12th, and on the following day we sailed from Gravesend, after our Majesties had inspected the ship and the Queen had entrusted us her Union Jack to carry to the South. On January 1st, 1908, at 4 p.m. we cast off from New Zealand.

A Tribute.

I naturally cannot go into the details of the expedition here. The work that has been done is already known in outline, and the full narrative will appear before the end of the year. The scientific results will take longer to prepare, and therefore to publish; but, in talking of the success of the expedition, I must mention that it is not my success alone, for I am not "the only pebble on the beach." It was due to the unity of purpose, the unselfishness of the desire to give and take of the fourteen men who were on the shore party with me, and the twenty-two men on the ship which made the expedition as successful as it has been generously described to me by the world.

Every Man His Due.

If I went into the recital of the work and energy, the thought and endeavours, of my comrades, I could fill pages of "A. P." before I did justice to them. Here, I can only say I owe them a debt of gratitude as the leader of the party; and the world, which will profit in future from the scientific work done on the expedition, will recognize that they are responsible for the greatest possible measure for the work which was carried through. With regard to the success, I recognize, as every man must recognize, that the pioneer of every movement is largely responsible for the success of those who follow him.

Captain Scott was the pioneer of Antarctic travel, and the experience gained with him proved most useful to me, though my course lay well to the east of the Discovery's journey. Still, the barrier surface presented surfaces similar to what it did on the last Southern journey I was on, though the snow was undoubtedly deeper this time.

Nansen's Invention.

Tennyson says in "Ulysses":

"All experience is an arch where through,\nGleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades\nFor ever and for ever when I move."

Our Southern work, based on the experience of the past, proves the truth enshrined in those words. It also proved our indebtedness to Dr. Nansen. He was the inventor of the sledge, which, with slight modifications, we used, and he was the inventor of the cooker we took with us. It only weighed about 15 lbs., and 94 per cent. of the heat generated was used. Indeed, while Nansen may be said to be directly responsible for the large amount of knowledge we have of the North Polar regions, he is indirectly responsible for the length of journeys, dependent on efficiency of equipment in the South Polar regions.

An Amusing Story.

Down South every man had his own cubicle which he decorated in his own particular way. One of them was exceedingly devoted to the career of Napoleon, and was a great authority on the Napoleonic period. He decorated the partition of his cubicle with a portrait of his hero. When he returned from one journey he found that an artist had made Napoleon's nose red and had painted fires about his feet. When the owner of the cubicle returned and saw the changes that had been made, he promptly renamed the picture Sir Hudson Lowe.

The Question of the Baths.

Many people have naturally been curious about our going without a bath for 190 days. To a certain extent we were prepared for this, for in the hut we washed only once a week, if as often. On the march we had no inclination to wash, even if we could have done so. The cold, however, prevented that. Indeed, we never took our clothes off during the whole time. You must remember that one does not need washing in the Antarctic, for there is no dust, and we never got dirty. We might have washed our hands and face, but we didn't, for it was much too cold, and it would have used up our valuable oil.

What an Explorer Eats.

The question of temperature naturally suggests that of food. I have been asked very often whether our appetites increased as we went South. Our rations certainly decreased. We started out with ninety-one days' provisions, and we spent this out for 120 days. In the beginning we had thirty-two ounces of meat, but, however, did not play a very large part in it. The instinct in the Antarctic is for heating food—flaxseed chocolate, cheese, butter. We also took pekinese, which was made in Copenhagen, where they probably know more about it than anywhere else. Nansen's and the National Antarctic expedition's pekinese were made there.

Chocolate and Cheese.

On the march, for lunch, we used to have chocolate four days a week and cheese three days. We all much preferred the chocolate days, and greatly enjoyed those two days, which was our ration, and which we found highly nutritious. One point which struck us all was how man's attitude towards food alters as he goes South. At the beginning, a man might have been something of an epicure, but we found that before he got very far even raw horse-meat tasted very good.

Contrasts.

It may interest you to hear that in Sydney on my return from this expedition I had a very large audience—over 4,000 people in the town hall—and this is a contract to a lecture I gave in Leith a few years ago. I hired the hall and advertised my lecture. On the evening of the day I drove from my house in Edinburgh, and, instead of a place full, as I hoped, I saw one drunken man, two old women, and a couple of boys assembled to hear me. I went down stairs and asked the cabman whether he would not like to come to the lecture. He thanked me, but assured me that he would rather not, as he was very comfortable where he was. Too Bad!

Eventually about twenty people turned up, and to them I delivered my lecture. When I went home I related my experience to my wife, and we went into a calculation that I had spent something like seven pounds in hiring the hall and advertising the lecture, and that all I likely to receive was twenty-five shillings. "No," said my wife, "you won't get as much, for I sent the maid and the cook to hear you; so that is two shillings off."
Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton CVO, QBE.

Obituary

By James. M. Wordie

Extract from the Geographical Journal, Volume 59, Part 3, Pages 228-9

Sir Ernest Shackleton’s death on January 5, at the very outset of a new expedition, removes the last of three great Antarctic explorers of this century. Scott, Bruce, and Shackleton (by their qualities of fine courage and endurance and devotion to science) have succeeded in placing their country in the forefront of Antarctic exploration. In their different ways they widened the bounds of knowledge, they set an example of heroism and they created romance for the generations to come.

Shackleton was born in Ireland in 1874 and spent the early part of his life in that country. By descent he was not an Irishman, however. His school was Dulwich, but the call of the sea had lured him away before he was sixteen. He served before the mast in various sailing ships, in due course took his mate’s certificate, and finally became an officer in the Union-Castle Line. His experiences in one of that company’s troopships during the South African war were published under the title ‘O.H.M.S.’ Shackleton at this period must have been a curious blend of practical seaman and poet.

At this time the Discovery Expedition was being fitted out for Antarctic work. It was intended to be purely naval, but finally the personnel included two officers of the Mercantile Marine. Of these Armitage had had previous Arctic experience, while Shackleton secured selection by sheer persistency and force of character. The account of the expedition shows that, from the first, Shackleton looked like coming to the front. That he was soon made editor of the South Polar Times was a tribute both to his personality and to his literary instincts. In those days, as always, there was keen competition to be included in the southern party: it was on Wilson and on Shackleton that the choice finally fell. This, the pioneer long sledge journey in Antarctica, was not so successful as Scott had hoped. First one, and then all three, developed scurvy. Even after the symptoms were first discovered, the party pushed on southwards for another week. It was a big risk, however, and on the return journey Shackleton came very near death: Scott refers in admiration to his fierce determination to keep alive. As a result of his illness Shackleton was sent home on the relief ship Morning, and thus missed participating in Scott’s great western journey the next year.

Shackleton had now found his vocation and he was soon planning an expedition of his own, which aimed at reaching the South Pole itself. In common with his other expeditions, it was essentially a private venture, and started without state aid of any sort. Shackleton, as would be expected by those who knew him, at once broke with tradition. The ship was not to winter, ponies would be used, and motor haulage would be given a fair trial. Winter quarters were established at Cape Royds in January 1908. Owing to the situation of the hut, no depots could be laid out in the autumn; instead, a party led by Prof. David made the first ascent of Mount Erebus. The southern journey was begun at the end of October, the one and only supporting party being sent back when but 38 miles south of Hut Point. The depot laid in the spring in 79° 36’S., 150 geographical miles from winter quarters, was picked up on November 15. If all went well, the odd 700 miles from there to the Pole were within the compass of the party. Four weeks later Shackleton, Wild, Marshall, and Adams had discovered, and were climbing, the Beardmore Glacier to the plateau. On January 9 they were within 100 miles of the Pole. But for the loss of a pony down a crevasse they would probably have reached their goal. As it was, all Arctic and Antarctic records had been broken, the Antarctic by nearly 400 miles. To have gone on a day
longer would have meant the death of the whole party. Even then they left the narrowest of margins; on one occasion they were forty-eight hours without food. The story of the return march of seven weeks is a record of magnificent courage and endurance. The daily average was at first 20, then 10-15 miles on three-quarter rations. At the very end of it all Shackleton performed the astounding feat of going back with the relief party for the two members who had broken down. By so doing he covered 100 miles without proper rest on top of a 1700-mile journey. This sledge journey is now regarded as the greatest feat of its kind either in the Arctic or in the Antarctic. Together with Prof. David’s march to the South Magnetic Pole it fired the public enthusiasm, and Shackleton’s reputation as an explorer was made. Honours were showered upon him, including knighthood, and the Special Gold Medal of this Society.

During the next few years his thoughts were continually turning towards the south. As can be read in the Introduction to ‘The Home of the Blizzard,’ it was Shackleton who initiated the Australasian Antarctic Expedition but it was finally organized and commanded by Sir Douglas Mawson. He himself did not return to the Antarctic till 1914. The pole had by then been reached by both Amundsen and Scott. Shackleton’s new venture had as its object the still more ambitious plan of crossing the continent, a conception quite sound, but nevertheless not destined to be realized. The Ross Sea party did all that they were set to do, and laid a depot at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier. In the Weddell Sea, however, Shackleton’s good fortune deserted him, and a combination of adverse circumstances ended in his ship being beset. After drifting helplessly for nine months, she was finally crushed and sunk. The narrative of how the shipwrecked party ultimately extricated itself from what appeared a hopeless position is of epic character. The story fortunately has been adequately told, and in these chapters of ‘South’ Shackleton’s powers as a writer are shown at their very best. It is left for others, however, to record how the successful ending of a year’s wandering must be directly attributed to the personality of the leader. When difficult decisions had to be made, Shackleton invariably made the right choice. His uncanny prevision became a byword. The last and most difficult decision of all was taken when he placed the main party under Wild’s charge, and himself went to seek relief. Had he failed, his action might easily have been misconstrued. Events justified his decision, and in the end he triumphantly rescued the Elephant Island party. It is doubtful if there is any parallel to these adventurous months. Few explorers have had such demands made on their powers of organization and of leadership: and those few have generally failed.

On his return in 1917 Shackleton threw himself into the war. After being first of all sent on a diplomatic mission to South America, he was finally chosen to give advice to the troops on the North Russian Front. His friends knew, however, that he would have liked to have figured in a fighting unit. His attitude to the national emergency is expressed in a recruiting speech made in Australia in 1917, from which the following maybe quoted: “To take your part in this war is not a matter merely of patriotism, not a matter merely of duty or of expediency: it is a matter of the saving of a man’s soul and of a man’s own opinion of himself.”

The 1914-1917 Expedition had returned heavily burdened, but Shackleton set himself, as he had done on the previous occasion, to pay off the debt by means of lectures and the sale of his book. While still lecturing on the experiences of the Endurance party, he was already making plans for a new venture. He had always longed to visit the Beaufort Sea, but in the end he had to change his mind; and when the Quest sailed in September 1921, it was with the intention of discovering the unknown coast west of Enderby Land and of exploring the little-known sub-Antarctic islands. Islands had always appealed to his romantic and imaginative nature. There is no more fitting burial place therefore than South Georgia, one of the least known of these islands, and the one moreover where he accomplished one of his greatest exploits.

Shackleton possessed in unusual measure the highly poetic imagination which is traditionally associated with a love of exploration. It is well expressed in his writings and in the naming of his ships; occasionally even he would produce some lines of original poetry. Those on Mount Erebus are probably the only ones published. His wonderful memory made it easy for him to
have ready a line of verse suitable to almost every occasion. It would generally be from Browning, his favourite poet. Once started, he might go on quoting him for hours from his well-stored memory. When combined with great physical strength and with powers of leadership, a nature of this sort is the very stuff from which the great explorers are made. Shackleton, indeed, possessed the faculty of leadership to a pre-eminent degree. That, together with his generosity, made all the best men who had served with him his staunch adherents. They had implicit faith in his judgment. Shackleton's was the rarer type of courage which is controlled rather than rash. Two of his greatest decisions—to turn back on the southern journey, and to remain on the ice after the *Endurance* was crushed are examples of his caution. In the first case he had to fight down his own ambition; in the second he had to face the adverse criticism of some members of his party. Caution and shrewdness were combined, however, with invincible optimism; this made him a trying partner at card games, and was also responsible for a continual hankering after and belief in hidden treasure. The latter feature was but another instance of his romantic nature. It was perhaps this which first suggested to his intimates a likeness to Raleigh. Then his friends found that he was a Raleigh in many ways—courtier, poet, explorer, and lover of his country. In an age which is producing modern Elizabethans Shackleton will surely be reckoned as most true to type.

J. M. W.

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**Duncan Carse and his connection with South Georgia**

Most members of the James Caird Society will associate the name Duncan Carse with the island of South Georgia. The connection was highlighted in obituaries in national newspapers after Carse’s death at the age of 90 in May 2004 and by the issue of a set of four commemorative postage stamps by the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in September 2005. Lasting reminders of Carse’s association with the island include the name Mount Carse (2331 m), the highest and most beautiful peak of the Salvesen Range, and a bronze bust recently presented to the South Georgia Museum at Grytviken. But the main reason to link Carse’s name with South Georgia is his initiation of a series of survey expeditions to the island that began in 1951, and culminated with the publication in 1958 of the first accurate topographic map.

Duncan Carse planned and led the 6-man South Georgia Survey (SGS) expedition of 1951-52, the 4-man SGS of 1953-54 and the 8-man SGS of 1955-56. These expeditions were the first organised for the specific purpose of systematically mapping South Georgia. Carse returned alone to finish off some final details of the survey work in 1956-57, and the results of all the work carried out between 1951 and 1957 were compiled for the Directorate of Overseas Surveys (D.O.S.) by Tony Bomford, Chief Surveyor of the SGS 1955-56. The resultant map was published in 1958, as D.O.S. 610, at a scale of 1:200,000; it was attractively produced, with contours at 500-ft intervals, coloured blue on ice and brown on ice-free ground. D.O.S. 610 remained as the definitive topographic map of South Georgia until a satellite-based map was published by the British Antarctic Survey in 2004, coincidentally the year of Carse’s death.

No person, and no organisation, commissioned or directed Carse to initiate this mapping program, and he received no salary or other monetary reward for doing it. In 1949, when he began to prepare the ground for the SGS 1951-52, he was a successful radio actor in London, playing the lead role of “Dick Barton, Special Agent” in daily 15-minute episodes on the B.B.C. Light Programme. At the end of each episode Dick found himself in a situation of seemingly insuperable danger, from which he narrowly escaped at the start of the next, using his exceptional ingenuity and daring. The adventures of Dick Barton, a forerunner of James Bond, were followed by an estimated 15 million enthusiastic listeners, and Duncan Carse’s name was a household word throughout the country. But in early 1951 he resigned from this role, and later that year
left for South Georgia with the five other expedition members who had volunteered to join him on the first SGS.

What motivated this apparently abrupt change of career? And why was he especially drawn to South Georgia? Those questions don’t have short or simple answers, but I’ll try in this article to address them, and start by describing my own contact with Carse. In January 1951 Duncan Carse wrote to Robert Shackleton, Professor of Geology at the University of Liverpool, to say that he had been recommended to include a Geologist in a planned expedition to South Georgia; and could Shackleton suggest someone who might be interested?

Shackleton, a distant cousin\(^1\) of Sir Ernest, was not enthusiastic, but replied that a research student of his might be interested. As the student concerned, I was in the process of writing a Ph.D. thesis, and finding it hard going. I was then twenty-two years old and after five years at university was keen to see more of the world. Clearly, the chance to join a party led by such a celebrity as Duncan Carse was not one to be passed over lightly, and I arranged to meet him in London.

We met on Scott’s expedition ship “R.R.S.\(\text{Discovery}\)”, then moored at the Thames Embankment. As we shook hands, and he took me down to his tiny cabin, I was impressed by the way he, a man sixteen years my senior, treated me as an equal in discussion of the organisation of the proposed expedition. The term “magnetic personality” may be a cliche, but I can’t find a more accurate way to describe my impression of him at that first meeting. He was dark, of medium height, and compactly built, with an air of controlled physical strength. But it was Carse’s voice that was his most striking attribute. It was a resonant baritone, every word clearly articulated, and with an intonation always matched to the mood of what he was saying. It was a voice that caught and held the attention of listeners.

Although our meeting was arranged for him to check my suitability to join his party, he seemed to take this for granted from the start of our conversation, and when we shook hands again at the end there was a clear understanding that he wanted me to be a member of his team. However, because he was keen that the party was seen to have the blessing of the Falkland Islands Government he arranged for me to meet also Vivian (Bunny) Fuchs, then Director of the F.I.D.S. Scientific Bureau, and also a geologist, to check my suitability. Fuchs was satisfied after a short interview, but because the SGS finances were still insecure there was still some doubt whether the expedition would take place. By the middle of May Carse told me that the SGS 1951-52 was officially ‘on’, and would be leaving in September.

The six of us - Duncan Carse (Leader), Kevin Walton (Deputy), John Heaney and Gordon Smillie (Surveyors), Walter Roots (Ski-mountaineer) and myself (Geologist) - sailed from Glasgow on the Chr.Salvesen supply tanker “Southern Opal” on 16 October and arrived at Leith Harbour on 1 November. In 1951 Leith was a busy whaling station, with 33 catchers moored ready for the start of the season, and a bustle of other preparatory activity. We were soon ferried across to King Edward Point, where we were allowed to settle into the gaol as a base. After reconnaissance journeys from Royal Bay back to Cumberland Bay, and up the Neumayer Glacier to the Kohl-Larsen Plateau and back we were ready to start the first major survey of the southern interior of the island. We landed at Royal Bay on 9 December and sledged steadily westward up the Ross Glacier, over the Ross Pass at its head, down the Brogger Glacier, and then southward onto the Spenceley Glacier.

At that point we were in high spirits and pleased with progress, but on 1 January 1952 I miskicked a step on a steep glacier slope close to a rock face, and slid into an open bergschrund. When I was finally recovered from 150 feet down it was evident that my left knee was seriously damaged, so there was nothing for it but to sledge me back to Cumberland Bay and signal for help from

\(^1\) Second cousin once removed.
Grytviken. Most of the ration boxes were left in a clearly marked depot on the glacier, ready for a later continuation of the journey. Unfortunately I had to take the next ship home, and the party was left a man short. The 5-man party then switched its attention westwards, and had a very successful 33-day survey journey in the north-central part of the island.

Then there was another setback when Kevin Walton got a telegram in March recalling him for service with the Royal Navy, and only four men were left. At that point Carse ‘borrowed’ a man (John Cheal) from F.I.D.S., and sent a 4-man party under Walter Roots’ leadership to repeat the southern journey, while he carried out coastal surveys by joining sealing parties. But after sledging up the Ross Glacier again Roots’ party failed to find the ration depot, and had to retreat down again. Then a gale of exceptional strength virtually destroyed their tents, and forced them to signal a passing sealer for help. By then, it was too late to organise further survey work, and the SGS 1951-52 had to return home with far less of the island surveyed than had been planned.

Carse was keen to return again to finish the job in the following season, but couldn’t get another party organised in time. By the time he was able to prepare for the second SGS, of 1953-54, my injured leg had recovered well enough for me to join him again. This time we were a party of four: Duncan Carse (Leader), Gordon Smillie (Deputy and Surveyor), Keith Warburton (Doctor and Mountaineer), and myself (Geologist); we established our base once more at the Grytviken gaol on 10 October 1953. Our problems began immediately, when Warburton became unfit to take part in the first journey, with a grumbling appendix. The remaining three of us carried out a survey at the northwestern end of the island, but tension arose between Carse and Smillie over survey strategy. When we got back to Grytviken it was clear that Warburton was too ill to take any further part in the fieldwork, and he returned by the first ship available. During the next journey, to the southern end, the differences between Carse and Smillie came to a head, and on return to Grytviken Carse sent Smillie back home. Carse and I spent the last few weeks of the season travelling with the sealers, and also backpacking together over the Cape Charlotte peninsula. As far as survey work was concerned the SGS 1953-54 achieved little, but I was fortunate in being able to do a significant amount of geological work.

After my geological reports on South Georgia had been completed, during 1954, I went to work in Africa and lost touch with Carse. However, Keith Warburton, a friend since 1951, kept me in touch by letter with South Georgia news. In this way I heard of the progress, and success, of the third SGS, of 1955-56. The eight members of this were Duncan Carse (Leader), Keith Warburton (Doctor and Mountaineer), Tony Bomford and Stan Paterson (Surveyors), George Spenceley (Photographer and Mountaineer) and Louis Baume, Tom Price and John Cunningham (Mountaineers). These men were, on average, older and more experienced than those of the first two SGSs, and as a result its survey work was much more effective. By the time it returned home in May 1956 the map of the island was almost complete. Carse returned on his own in the 1956-57 season to carry out local coastal surveys, and these were incorporated into all the earlier work for the publication of D.O.S. 610 in 1958.

My news about Duncan’s activities decreased after Keith Warburton was lost while climbing in the Karakoram in 1959, and was cut off even more when I moved to Australia in 1962. During the 1970s and 1980s I would occasionally be surprised by the appearance of his familiar face, and utterly unmistakable voice, on a television program. I also watched for the publication of Duncan’s book on the SGSs, which we all knew he intended to write, but it never seemed to appear, and by 2002 I was uncertain whether he was still alive.

In that year I had an unexpected e-mail message from Tony Bomford. Tony, whom I had never met, although I was aware that he had also moved to Australia and had become Director of the Australian National Mapping Department, told me that he would be disembarking from a ship at Albany, near my home, in December, and asked if we could meet; this proved to be our first and last meeting, as he died early in the following year. From Tony, in a couple of hours of...
intensive conversation, I learned not only that Duncan was still alive, but that he was in active cooperation with Sally Poncet to complete a book on his work in South Georgia. As I already planned to visit England in 2003 I got in touch with Duncan and arranged to have lunch with him and his wife Venetia at their home in Fittleworth on 4 June 2003. Meeting Duncan again after almost half-a-century was a memorable occasion for me. In his ninetieth year, he walked confidently to meet me, upright and without a stick. The years had changed him remarkably little: his hair was greying, but his handshake was firm, and his voice hardly altered. As with my earlier meeting with Tony Bomford, we had about two hours of intensive conversation, mainly on South Georgia matters, including his plans with Sally for the book, in which at that time I foresaw no personal involvement.

After my return to Australia, events moved quickly. First Sally Poncet found herself unable to devote time to the proposed book, and then Duncan died in May 2004. The chances of a proper record of the South Georgia Surveys ever being put together then seemed remote. But it seemed to me possible that if all survivors of the three SGSs could pool resources the situation might be retrievable, and there were obvious advantages in the story being told by those who took part. Of the total of twelve men who had joined Duncan Carse in his three South Georgia Surveys, seven were then known to be still living, four were known to have died, and one (Gordon Smillie) could not be traced. After positive responses from those seven survivors, and the encouragement of Sally Poncet and Venetia Carse, I began putting the story together, and in early 2005 travelled to Canada and England to meet all those involved, and to spend time at Fittleworth to work through the correspondence and other files that Duncan had left there. I was also able to visit the Scott Polar Research Institute, and inspect relevant archival files there.

In conversations (both face-to-face and by e-mail) with other surviving members of the three SGSs between 2003 and 2005 I became aware that a number of us had different perceptions of Carse’s motivation for initiating the mapping of South Georgia. Throughout the long period after 1954 when I lost contact with him, I retained the impression that the main reason for his organisation of the South Georgia Survey 1951-52 was to demonstrate his credentials for Leadership of a major trans-Antarctic expedition. To my surprise, I found that the concept was new to both Tony Bomford and others who took part in the SGS 1955-56, as well as to Sally Poncet. Kevin Walton had no doubt of its truth, and I was puzzled as to why something well known to Walton and myself in 1951-52 was not equally well understood by members of SGS 1955-56 and others with a strong current interest in South Georgia. I even began to doubt the reliability of my own memory.

When I met Carse again in June 2003 I was able to put the question to him directly: was the SGS 1951-52 intended to consolidate his potential as Leader of a major polar expedition? He had no hesitation in confirming that this was indeed the case, and showed me his 24-page plan “THE PROPOSED TRANS-ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION, 1955-58” that he had prepared and distributed in 1953. After his death, when I was able to work through his papers at Fittleworth I came to understand why those who were with him in 1955-56 knew little or nothing of his earlier plans. I also realised that there were many aspects of Duncan Carse’s life that I had never fully appreciated before. The first of these was that the story of the South Georgia Surveys and the story of Duncan’s life were so closely interwoven that they formed a single fabric. The second was that, when I came to write about Carse, I found that there was an enormous amount that I didn’t know about him. In the remainder of this article I outline his early life and show both how and why the mapping of South Georgia became for many years the central concern of his life. The space available to tell his story here is not enough for it to be supported by reference to the documentary evidence, which is included in the book which I have now written, but is yet to be published, and what follows is a very short summary of the driving forces of his life.

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2 Duncan Carse’s papers, which he bequeathed jointly to his wife Venetia and Sally Poncet, have since been archived with the British Antarctic Survey.
Verner Duncan Carse was born in Fulham on 28 July 1913, the only child of Andreas Duncan and Florence Carse. His father was of Scottish and Norwegian descent: a successful painter and Royal Academician. His mother was born Florence Soames, a member of the extensive family linked to the Churchills. Soon after Duncan was born his parents went to live in America and Duncan was left with his maternal grandparents in Greenwich, where his grandfather was rector of Old Church; he was cared for mainly by his spinster aunt Winnie. On his grandfather’s death the family moved to Bognor Regis, where Duncan lived with his grandmother and aunt. When Duncan was nine his parents returned from America to settle in Berkshire, while Duncan was sent to a preparatory boarding school. He won a choral scholarship to Sherbourne, where he excelled in music, and was a good average student who received a sound liberal and traditional education. He was then sent to complete his education at an International school in Lausanne, where he became fluent in French and German.

Duncan was not attracted to any of the professions appropriate for his family background - the church, the forces, the law, politics, or medicine - nor was he anxious to spend time at university. He had talent in both music and art, but received no encouragement to pursue either as a career. Finally, his mother persuaded him to join a stationery company as a sales trainee, but after selling four boxes of notepaper in three months, he resigned, and on his own initiative signed on, in September 1932, as an apprentice on the “Archibald Russell”, a four-masted barque due to sail from Greenwich for Australia to collect a cargo of wheat.

This was not the capricious choice of a self-willed 19-year-old seeking adventure and excitement. It was the first practical step in the plan of a thoughtful and ambitious young man to gain the experience that might lead to a career in polar exploration. The plan, sparked by the classics of the ‘Heroic Age’ of British Antarctic exploration, such as Apsley Cherry-Garrard’s _Worst Journey in the World_ and Shackleton’s _South_, began as a general aim, but was later to crystallise into a clear ambition to lead the first expedition to cross the Antarctic continent by sledge, and to succeed where Shackleton had heroically failed.

When Carse returned to Falmouth with the “Archibald Russell” in May 1933 he had circled the globe via Cape Horn as a square-rig sailor and his vision of a career in polar exploration was more sharply focussed. A few months later he signed on as a seaman on “R.R.S. Discovery II”. This ship sailed south for a programme of systematic oceanographic survey in the Southern Ocean, following the edge of the pack ice. On return for a refit at Simonstown in June 1934 Carse was intrigued by a rumour that on its next leg of her cruise “Discovery II” would be assisting the British Graham Land Expedition of 1934-37 (BGLE) to establish a base on the Antarctic Peninsula. The rumour proved true, and four days after the “Discovery II” arrived at Port Stanley, on 24 November, the BGLE expedition ship “Penola” also docked. Carse’s transfer between the ships was quickly arranged, and on 1 December, as a seaman on “Penola” he became the youngest member of the BGLE.

Carse hoped that as a member of the BGLE he would acquire traditional polar travelling skills such as sledging, as well as have the opportunity to learn, by practice, surveying and navigating techniques. But the way the expedition was run meant that his duties, throughout the first year, were solely those of a seaman, and unforeseen events forced his second winter to be spent on the ship on South Georgia and the Falklands. In August 1937, after the BGLE, Carse returned to England disappointed with the progress of his polar career, and needing to rethink his strategy for its achievement.

Despite this disappointment there was one important positive result from his BGLE experience. He had established good personal relationships with some of the BGLE scientists who were later to occupy positions of influence in British “Antarctic politics”. There were three in particular with whom he kept in contact for the remainder of their lives (all died before him), and whose help and advice he felt able to call on in the pursuit of his polar plans. All three were Cambridge graduates whose interest in polar exploration had been influenced by James Wordie. Before

Continues on page 43...
Cape Royds hut 1908

Cape Royds hut 2006 (with new roof coverings)
BRITISH ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION
1907

Route and Surveys of the
SOUTH MAGNETIC POLAR PARTY
1908-09.

From Triangulation and Traverses by
DOUGLAS MAWSON B.Sc., B.E.

Scale 1:1,000,000.

Reference

SOUTH
THE VOYAGE of the "ENDURANCE"
The subsequent drift on the pack ice, and the various Relief attempts
Mrs Sams stove in Cape Royds hut (2002).

Jars of salt in collapsed venesta box outside hut (2002).
Custom-built conservation laboratory (Scott Base)
joining the BGLE, each had taken part in expeditions to the Arctic. They were: G.C.L. (Colin) Bertram, Biologist, who later became Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute, W.L.S. (Launcelot) Fleming, Chaplain, Geologist and Chief Scientist, who was later to become Bishop of Norwich, then of Portsmouth and Chaplain to the Queen, and B.B. (Brian) Roberts, Ornithologist, who first served with the Scott Polar Research Institute and then with the Research Department of the Foreign Office, where he was to be a principal architect of the Antarctic Treaty.

On his return to England in 1937, Carse’s strategic ambition of involvement in Antarctic exploration remained strong, and he would have thought long and hard about his next step to achieve it. But the logic of his next decision, to join the British Broadcasting Corporation, was largely driven by financial necessity: his voyages on the “Archibald Russell”, the “Discovery II” and the “Penola” had left him rich in seagoing sail experience, but had neither made him wealthy nor provided him with the means to earn a reasonable living other than at sea. His appointment as a B.B.C. Announcer, after an aunt suggested applying for the job, gave him the chance to utilise his outstanding voice profitably and professionally.

Duncan’s talents proved to be perfectly suited for radio presentation, and he enjoyed the challenges of the new work. Handsome, charming, and with his background of square-rig adventure, he joined for the first time in the social activities of a city, and in August 1938 married Sylvia Hadfield in Hampstead: their first daughter was born in the following year. If he had not had within him a driving ambition to make his name as a polar explorer he would have been well positioned by 1939 to follow, with the B.B.C., a safe career for which he was naturally gifted, and which would have provided him and his family with a comfortable lifestyle. But a restlessness in him led to his impatience with the bureaucratic B.B.C. culture, with which he found himself in increasing conflict.

At the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 Carse applied to join the R.N.V.R., but his work with the B.B.C. was regarded as a reserved occupation, and he was not allowed to leave until 1942. He served initially as an Ordinary Seaman, but was commissioned Sub-Lieutenant after passing his Officer training course (King Alfred, Lancing) with the highest marks ever recorded. After his demobilisation in 1945 Carse returned to his work in radio in London, but kept in close touch with polar matters. He kept in contact with his old BGLE. colleagues, and attended meetings of the Royal Geographical Society, as well as the annual Antarctic Club dinner, probably the most fruitful information source of all. His earlier ambitions burned as strongly then as they had done earlier, and he watched for opportunities to translate them into action.

Hearing that a new government organisation - the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (F.I.D.S.) - was to be established to continue work on the Antarctic Peninsula essentially similar to that which the BGLE. had started before the war, Duncan sought Brian Roberts’ help to join it. But although Roberts was sympathetic to his aspirations the committee responsible for appointments felt that Carse didn’t quite fit the planned structure of F.I.D.S.: he lacked the qualifications needed for appointment in any scientific field, and had no practical experience of overland polar travel; and his sail experience was by then outdated, as ships used or operated by F.I.D.S. would be diesel-powered.

Disappointed with this rejection, Carse decided to extend his abilities into film-making, and obtained support from the Maritime Museum for a film documenting a voyage of one of the last commercial square-rigged ships, the four-masted barque “Passat”. Duncan was to oversee it, take part, and do the voice-over. The “Passat” sailed from Southern Sweden in 1947 and reached Cape Town later the same year: Duncan had added film-making to his list of qualifications, but the complexity of his personal life had also increased. His marriage had begun to decline during the war years, and its collapse was completed by his meeting with Lisa Wilen, a Finnish passenger on the “Passat”. She became his second wife in July 1949.
After this diversion Carse worked as a freelance radio presenter, lecturer and journalist, and his radio career reached a new height in January 1949, when he was offered the role of Dick Barton, Special Agent in the popular daily B.B.C. serial thriller. He was the second actor to take the leading part, and his name became a household word among British radio listeners until he relinquished it early in 1951. The stimulus for him to abandon this promising career came about because an opportunity for polar exploration had at last appeared.

Two men who had returned to England in 1949 after service with F.I.D.S. (Kevin Walton and Duggie Mason) became interested in organising a small polar expedition free from government bureaucratic control. They consulted Brian Roberts at the Scott Polar Research Institute for advice, and he suggested that South Georgia might be a good target for their initiative. Through Roberts, Carse heard of their plans and the three agreed to join forces. Mason withdrew at an early stage, and Walton took a job in the Lake District, so that during 1950 Carse became, by default, Leader, general organiser, recruiter and fund-raiser of the South Georgia Survey 1951-52, with Walton as Second-in-Command.

The overt objective of the SGS 1951-52 was to make a map of the whole island, but for various reasons, already mentioned, this was not achieved. Its underlying purpose, mentioned by Carse only to a few confidants, was to strengthen his credentials as the potential leader of a future trans-Antarctic expedition. The SGS 1951-52, although useful, did not achieve that underlying objective, and on return to England in 1952 Carse soon became aware that the possibility of a British trans-Antarctic expedition was in many minds other than his. In consequence, if the ambition which he had nurtured since 1932 was to have any chance of fulfilment he would need to do two things. The first of these was to take a further expedition to South Georgia to finish the map. The second was to place his trans-Antarctic vision before persons of influence in Antarctic politics.

It was in fulfilment of this second task that in 1953 he prepared and distributed the 24-page document headed “THE PROPOSED TRANS-ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION, 1955-58”, which I first sighted in 2003. He could not afford to delay the first task, so when the SGS 1953-54 left Glasgow for South Georgia in September 1953 he advised all recipients of his plan that Brian Roberts was authorised to act on his behalf while he was away. The SGS 1953-54, achieved neither the completion of the mapping nor the enhancement of his reputation as a polar leader. By the time of his return to England again it was clear that Vivian Fuchs would be the leader of what became the successful Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1955-58, and Carse knew that the ambition that he had nurtured since 1932 would never be fulfilled.

Although Carse was personally devastated by this turn of events it is greatly to his credit that he took up the immediate challenge of properly completing the mapping of South Georgia. This was the primary, and sole, purpose of the SGS 1955-56, which effectively completed the mapping, thanks to the careful selection of the eight members of the party. In the following season, 1956-57, Carse returned alone to carry out some fill-in coastal mapping around the whaling stations, but he himself admitted that one reason he did so was to avoid facing the problems of his life in England. When he finally got home in 1957 he was not only forced to deal with two divorces and bankruptcy but also with the lack of a driving purpose in his life.

Characteristically, he turned to activity to fill the gap. By this time he had fallen under the spell of South Georgia and he began to seek financial backing for a further expedition (the ‘Allardyce-Salvesen Expedition’) to the island, this time focused on the ascent of all the major mountain peaks. In this enterprise he was unsuccessful and he turned instead to an idea that had first occurred to him during the SGS 1955-56. The plan was to establish a small camp on a remote part of South Georgia and live there for at least a year alone. He called it an ‘experiment in solitude’, planning to make a film of his life there, and also seeing it as the subject of a book.
The Falkland Islands Government agreed to lease about four hectares of land at Ducloz Head for an annual rent of one shilling a year, and the Royal Navy offered him transport to the island. Ducloz Head lies at the northwestern end of Undine South Harbour, on the southern coast of South Georgia, and is just over ten kilometres southwest of the summit of Mount Paget - a position of natural beauty with few rivals on earth. “H.M.S. Owen” sailed for South Georgia in September 1960 taking Carse, his prefabricated hut, two dinghies and twelve tons of food and miscellaneous stores. Carse was landed successfully in February 1961 and in April the ship called back to check on his progress. At that time he had no problems but early in the morning of 20 May, before dawn and while he was asleep inside, the hut was wrecked by an enormous wave that surged over the campsite. His stores and equipment were scattered along the shore, many items seriously damaged or lost altogether. Carse remained relatively unscathed, and managed to locate a small tent among the debris. He had enough food and fuel for survival but his conditions were uncomfortable and he could achieve none of the practical things that he had planned. He remained in that situation for 116 days, throughout the winter months, before he attracted the attention of the sealer “Petrel”, and was taken on board on 12 September 1961.

For Carse this was a traumatic experience that forced him to redefine his life. Back in England he found it hard to settle in one place for long, moving between variouslodgings in London, where he no longer felt comfortable, and living also for short periods in remoter parts of the country. He finally found peace of mind when he married Venetia Kempe in Chelsea on 19 December 1962. She had been working as a hospital almoner when they met by chance not long before his departure. Soon after the marriage they moved to a secluded house in Fittleworth, a quiet village in West Sussex, and for the next 44 years, until Carse died in May 2004, Venetia provided an emotional security that had been missing from his earlier life.

Using the gift of his outstanding voice Carse returned, during those later years of stable and increasingly reclusive life in Sussex, to freelance radio work, only accepting contracts in which he had some interest. He was also concerned with a number of projects related to South Georgia and revisited the island several times but his greatest achievements related to it were his organisation and leadership of the expeditions which led to the production of D.O.S. 610, and stood as the definitive map of South Georgia for almost half-a-century.

Alec Trendall
THE SOUTH GEORGIA SURVEY 1955-6

109 BEAUFORT STREET,
LONDON, S.W.3.

W.O. Sloane Esq.,
Colonial Office,
The Church House,
Great Smith Street,
London,
S.W.1.

Dear Sloane,

I thought you'd like to know that we've been having a very easy passage out - although it's blowing up this evening from the N.W. - and expect to arrive on Friday.

The party are shaking down extraordinarily well together, and I am genuinely optimistic that we shall turn in a really good season's work and finish the job.

With best wishes -

Yours

[Signature]

109 BEAUFORT STREET
LONDON, S.W.3.

THE SOUTH GEORGIA SURVEY 1955-6

109 BEAUFORT STREET,
LONDON, S.W.3.

The Under-Secretary of State for the
Church House,
Colonies,
Great Smith Street,
London,
S.W.1.

Sir,

Some weeks ago, I was asked by Peter Scott of the Wildfowl Trust if I would - and could - take and ship back to this country alive for breeding purposes a number of South Georgia Teal. At the time, a large figure was mentioned, but this was subsequently reduced to five (5) pairs as being more in line with practical possibilities. On the understanding that I would do my level best to carry out this commission, the Wildfowl Trust have since made a contribution to next season's costs of £100.

I now learn that the South Georgia Teal is a protected species and that this project may provoke considerable outcry from ornithologists and others who may be deeply concerned with the preservation of the species. I have therefore put the matter to Dr R.H. Roberts of the Foreign Office Research Department who is of the opinion that the taking of three (3) pairs of South Georgia Teal could not sensibly affect the island's population of this species and would provide a reasonable chance of getting back at least two pairs alive.

May I therefore, Sir, have permission to take a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of five (5) pairs of South Georgia Teal for the purpose as stated in paragraph one?

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant

Duncan Carsøe (Leader)
ANTARCTICA
An introduction to some of the principles surrounding music composition with Antarctic field recordings.
By Craig Vear.

INTRODUCTION
In the winter (Austral summer) of 2003/4 I embarked on an ambitious musical project in Antarctica, having been awarded a joint fellowship from Arts Council England and the British Antarctic Survey's Artists and Writers Programme. The purpose of my visit was to compile a unique library of field recordings from the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic regions, which would become the sound source for music composition.

The focus of my many field recordings was to capture and reflect the relationship between the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and the continent it embraces, and the life and populations of the area surrounding the Weddell Sea. Under these headings, the natural sounds (wind, sea, weather and wildlife), the human sounds (scientists living and working, boat captains, ‘talking heads’ interviews and conversation), the mechanical sounds (machinery, generators, boats, scientific experiments, travel, entertainment), and the phenomenological sounds (whistling rigging, clanking objects, crunching ice floes, musical accidents) were of equal significance.

I journeyed to far and desolate lands, recorded colonies of penguins and seals, flew to isolated huts deep in the Antarctic Peninsula, and smashed through pack ice aboard an ice strengthened ship. I experienced the euphoric highs and the mind-crushing lows of solitude, the overwhelming presence of all who had come and gone, together with the realisation that I was, as a human and an artist, a mere speck on this planet.

The main artistic product of my three-month journey is Antarctica, a large-scale surround sound electroacoustic composition, created from this sound library compiled during my residency. Selected sounds were layered, stacked, collaged and combined to form a rich and complex theatre of sound.

But what is meant by the term electroacoustic composition? Electro would suggest there is probably a computer involved [a tool]; acoustic - relating to the whole field of sound, and composition can be defined as an intension to organise sound - which could refer to the sounds made as a result of pressing the keys on a piano, or the sounds made by bowing a stringed instrument; the textures and rhythms created using an array of un-tuned percussion, the loops and samples of popular music and electronica, or the environmental recordings of the wind, sea, or birds. “When I became musical, all the sounds around me also became musical.” - Bill Fontana (sound artist).

There is no prescribed modal or style that can be said to be electroacoustic music. There are many interpretations of its definition: ambient music, digital sampling and dance culture, computer synthesis, real-time manipulation of live sound, data auralisation, JAVA/Flash web based music applications, or neural network computer music generation, to catagorise but a few. Its creation no longer resides wholly in well funded research establishments, University departments, or expensive receding studios as the technology has developed to a point where once rare and expensive lumps of audio processing electronics, synthesizers, and multi-track recording devices are now available as software for hard disc digital recording systems based on modern computers. Additionally, real-time audio processing software created by the forerunners of digital audio research is available on the web, allowing anyone with a relatively fast PC (500MHz processor/256M RAM) the opportunity to record and manipulate audio or organise sound into music.
Developments in the powerful architecture of mobile computer technology, digital interfacing, and networks further allow new possibilities in music. They contribute to new attitudes towards composition and inform its vocabulary. Composers take influence from a wide variety of sonic agencies that surround and colour our lives: the sound scape that accompanies cultural identity, society, education, or geography, for example. Furthermore, the practice of listening has also been effected through the development of MP3, web streaming, iPods, home theatre surround technology; altering the way we perceive, consume and witness music. These allow composers to reconsider the ways in which we think and talk about the aesthetic of music and the creative process. However, while this accessibility to technology democratises the process of producing music from the constrains of traditional music instrument ability/proficiency, one concern still remains: compositional skill and aesthetical approach to the organisation of sound.

THE JOURNEY
From the outset I was aware that the success of this project depended entirely on the quality of the sound recorded. The technical system had to be sensitive enough to record a variety of situations ranging from the minute sounds of glacial movements to the rumpus of a penguin colony. It had to be portable so that it could be transported hundreds of miles to the centre of a frozen continent aboard Ski-doos and planes or slung over the shoulder whilst descending a giant crevasse. Also, recording ten thousand miles from England, reliability and power consumption were of paramount importance.

I contacted Sennheiser and spoke to their technical director, Jon Willet, about the difficulties of using recording equipment in an environment as hostile and remote as Antarctica. He explained how most of the recording equipment would be capable of surviving the temperatures and weather, although the moisture produced when it was brought into a warm environment like a tent, plane or base could prove hazardous. I decided to take a simple and robust recording system comprising a laptop computer, minidisc recorder, and stereo microphones. In the harsh environment of Antarctica -freezing temperatures and little humidity - tape becomes brittle and snaps, so the recording medium had to be either hard disc (too costly), or minidisc. It also proved prudent to take several smaller minidisc units and microphones as redundancy systems.

On the 23rd October 2003 I boarded a RAF Tristar and headed ‘South’. The previous months had been filled with training (sea survival, mountain rescue, first aid) and sorting out my affairs (assigning power of attorney, making a will).

After spending a week in the Falklands I departed onboard the Royal Research Ship James Clark Ross (JCR) for Antarctica across the notorious Drakes Passage:³

Force 4. Left Stanley escorted by a pod of those beautiful Hourglass Dolphins, and shadowed by a herd of pterodactyls. Slight feeling of apprehension leaving the relative safety of land and heading into the Southern Ocean towards Antarctica (well Signy Island in the South Orkney island group), still, what did I expect?


Force 8. Force 9. 48 mph winds gusting to 65, the Southern Ocean is not letting us down (although 120 mph gusts are possible and the Beaumont Scale reaches Force 12+). Ship, beating into the wind, has not made any way for a day. Maximum leanage 36°-it falls over at 41°!

1 Some of this software is available as free downloads on the Internet (Pro Tools Free, Audacity), or bundled as native applications (Apple’s Garage Band).
2 Pd - Miller Puckette at Centre for Research in Computing and the Arts, University of California, San Diego; jMax - Miller Puckette at IRCAM. SuperCollider -James McCartney; Bidule - Plogue Art et Technologie; various VST plug-in developers. Digital noise authoring environments designed using these software developments are also available on the Internet, such as GleechLab which uses Max/MSP/Jitter from Cycling 74.
The passage was as relentlessly noisy as it was fearful. For 5 days I would lie in bed watching the furniture launch from one side of the room to the other, whilst the whole ship would boom and shake from the pounding of another, even larger wave. Screws [or were they rivets from the hull?] would scurry around underneath the floor. Out on deck, whilst clad in survival suits and safety strops, I would listen to the ship became both performer and instrument, in the dense *Suite Macabre*: high pitched screams from the aerials, and cables; mid pitched drones from the ropes and warps that shackled paraphernalia to the deck; with the smashes and pounds from the big red ship (drum) accompanied the voices from inside the mind warning of ship wrecks and failed search attempts. It came as some relief to anchor off Signy Island and stand on dry land.

**SOUND OBJECTS**

Wherever possible I recorded sound, listened to the continent, absorbed the atmosphere, helped whenever I could; I wanted to be a visitor not a voyeur, a useful pair of hands not a hindrance. After each days field recording session the sounds were auditioned, edited and explored using audio manipulation software on the laptop in any adhoc space resembling a studio. Immediate scrutiny of these sound objects, in a critical listening environment, was essential in order to preserve a level of attachment to their source and their context. Over 6000 minutes were eventually collected so this research schedule also served to avoid errors of judgement upon return to the UK, and enabled maximum exploration time.

Initially analysis of the Antarctic sound objects centred on five broad elements: 1. Pitch - Refers to a dominant fundamental frequency within the sound object, which can also contain less overriding frequencies called harmonics. Primarily recognised as a note on traditional instruments, pitch can be present in most found sound: the air conditioner unit, the passing car. In Antarctica, pitch was to be found in the calls of the Gentoo, Adelie and King penguins; the wind whistling through the rigging of the tent, and the icicles at the bottom of a crevasse.

I applied a very simple, yet effective edit, on the close proximity recording of a single icicle that was repeatedly struck by a gloved knuckle. By editing away each impetus, a pure bell like sound remained, which contained a series of harmonics shifting towards a fundamental focus on each successive strike.

2. Texture - complexity of the integral sonic make-up of a sound event. This could describe the simple instrumental colour - the combination of fundamental and harmonic frequencies, or spectrally dense sound such as wind or sea.

Different composition of ice type and density would create a variety of textural sounds when the ship powered through the pack: from the wet slushy sound of pancake ice to the harsh white noise of thick pack ice. Alternating the recording positions helped amplify this phenomena: in a forward facing stereo recording made in hold number 2 (largest sea level, midships hold), it is possible to hear the movement of the ice along the hull, its textural composition unfolding alongside a sonic image of the dimensions of the cavity.

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3 Throughout the Antarctic residency I wrote a weekly diary for the Guardian newspaper website, which I will refer to during this article.

4 A young healthy ear is capable of sensing a range of frequencies from 20Hz to 20,000Hz, a far greater array of pitch colour than available on say the 88 note piano, whose range of fundamental frequencies lies between 27.5Hz and 4kHz. Using the piano to illustrate this point also demonstrates some of the limitations within the design of this music system and its general contribution to the formalization and ordering of Western European Art music. A 'lattice of the tempered scale, the rhythmic coordination required by harmonic structuration, the subordination of timbre to pitch and its streaming to separate instrumental layers' (Wishart).
3. Duration - time between sound events (rhythm).
   Walking on different types of snow and ice would create a variety of rhythmical sounds and textures: squeaks, creaks, smashes, crunches. Glacial melt water drummed through layers of moraine. Bergs striking the hull of the ship proved to be one of the more powerful sound objects in the library, with the massive resonant steel hull acting as a large percussion instrument as bergs and ‘bergy bits’ hit the ship during the sail through iced waters.

4. Dynamics - amplitude of sound event (sometimes incorrectly referred to as volume), it can relate to spatial dynamics of a surround environment - loud/soft, close/near.
   In Antarctica, my own ears began to decompress and regain sensitivity after many years listening to London, coupled with the absence of background noise in the pristine environment, distant sounds became audible. Glacial break-offs similar in sound to a thousand canons firing simultaneously could be heard resonating around the bay of Rothera.

5. Form-temporal organisation.
   An interesting sonic experience occurred during the recording of Fur Seals on Bird Island. After 30 minutes of recording the whimpers and fighting of the bull seals, a distant drone of the diesel engine could be heard. This clearly aggravated the seals and as a result the pitch centre of the calls and whimpers within the colony modulated to a higher frequency. As the boat approached closer to the bay their rhythmic interplay and dynamics heightened.

Example 1: Circumnavigation of an iceberg grounded in Rothera Bay
An unexpected sonic phenomena experienced in Antarctica occurs when compressed air bubbles trapped during the formation of ice, break through the sufficiently eroded ice layer, causing a tiny click/smash sound. The aural position of these clicks had no relationship to its actual source but appeared to be in close proximity. Also present were the various low resonant pitch gestures generated through wave interaction with eroded waterline cavities, and the rhythmical slapping of the hull of the boat. The recording was punctuated with an occasional sniff, or shuffle of Goretex from a human agent, two radio VHP radio communications, and a distant glacial break-off - which contributed to a surge in wave activity influencing the low pitch gestures. The hydrophone recording from under the berg was equally varied: distant Weddell seal calls, drumming sounds as bubbles escaped, grinding of the bergs on the seafloor, and the occasional sound of ‘bergy bits’ snapping off, alongside the familiar underwater sounds of fish snapping, and the dulled lapping of waves.

The problem with this simplification of the analysis of sound forces us to be concerned with overviews. Further problems occur when a complex sound object borders the elements of pitch and texture, or its trajectory has more to do with morphology than integral form. Moreover, it fails to fully consider the complexity contained within a single sound object. By focusing on the foreground, the background ambience or the environmental sonic landscape can be overlooked, a composite of which could be regarded as a complex musical event.

Example 2: Penguin colony, Gourley Point, South Orkney Islands.
In a section of the surround sound composition I aligned two appropriate extracts, from the 60 minute stereo recording of the penguin colony, in the front and rear hemispheres of the surround space. The accuracy of the original recording revealed multiple layers of foreground and background material, texturally and musically rich.

5 The human ear is capable of sensing air molecules vibrating at a dynamic range of 2 ten billionths of an atmosphere to 86 decibels without damage to the hearing system - that’s a sound pressure 20 thousand times greater. During expeditions into the deep field sites of Fossil Bluff and Sky Blu, presented with no exterior audible sound, my own human body became the agent to a nauseatingly loud mixture of drones and beats from my cardio-vascular, pulmonary and nervous systems.
Super foreground - Occasional percussive interest from stone and pebble movement, with sporadic and intense explosion of pitch and textural activity.
Foreground - A short guttural gesture is passed around the colony. Its next location is unpredictable, however the call is progressively intensified as it moves, inevitably leading to an intensely explosive fight, after which the guttural gesture progression would restart.
Background - Distant longer lyrical penguins calls.
Super background - Environmental sound of the waves and wind.
(Actually recorded was a colony of 15,000 breading pairs of Adelie penguins flanked by Fur seals, Chinstrap penguins, and egg stealing Skuas. There is little organic matter on these Southern islands, consequently nests are built from pebbles of which there is a finite amount. As a result there is a daily routine of stealing and reclamation, which leads to tension amongst the colony and inevitably leads to fights.)

LISTENING
In a traditional music concert, the audience witnesses a musician create a sound through a physical gesture and assign it a context: agent+energy=sonic gesture. When presented with music via a speaker system the listener is no longer offered any visual reference to the source of the sound. This raises many interesting issues for both the listener and the composer.

With this attachment removed, the listener has alternative modes of perception on which to choose. If the sound source is transparent, say a colony of penguins, the listener can choose to hear it as the sound of penguins, or as an organisation of the combination of pitch, texture, dynamics on a morphological trajectory through time. However, things become interesting when the sound source is not so transparent, has been manipulated, or its sound shape has been altered out of context. At this point the mind tends to perceive the sound in three ways: it is the sound of x (where x is an assigned aural perception), it sounds like x, or its sound behaves like x. Furthermore, with or without a transparent source the listener can enter an imaginary landscape, where each individuals mind perceives, unpredictably, an intimate interpretation of the music. There is no prescribed right or wrong, with the listener, and composer, free to choose between abstract or concrete modes of perception.

THE COMPOSITION
“Past the Antarctic convergence and through the Drakes passage into Iceberg territory. No visibility, however the radar, looking like a Mexicana pizza topping, is showing hundreds of bergs. Then the fog lifts, at which point you realise how big these bergs are. The distant ones, the size of London, are colossal, but it’s the smaller growlers with their beautiful cyan blues that just astound you.
The mountains of Signy are in the distance and penguins are darting out of the way of the ship with a disgruntled squawk. As we anchor, one is awestruck by these natural sculptures of sulphurous blue ice. Carved by a skilled and imaginative tool relinquished from thought, choice and ego.”

Example 3: The vocal quartets.
Once it can be considered that recorded sound is capable of containing music elements, it is only a short leap of faith to accept recordings of human utterance. Four conversations were selected from the many recorded during the residency. They were chosen for their relationship, past and present, with the heritage of the BAS base at Rothera. It is important to note that any narrative suggested by this selection process was secondary to the rhythmical intonation of their speech patterns. The chronological sequence of these selected sound objects were left intact as the collage was created. What became of interest was the complex musical interplay between the voices, and the unsaid communications of emotional intent and personality surrounding the actual content of their dislocated words.

My compositional process is concerned with extrapolating the inherent musical gestures from found sound, and their organisation. With the advancement of music technology I became interested in the representation of recorded sound and music through collage: taking sections
of audio and chopping them into fragments of un-uniformed length, then reorganising them into pieces of music. Through this process additional music and sonic phenomena become generated:

- rhythms created from the juxtaposition of the audio fragments
- digital clicks and glitching artifacts present in the editing process providing additional musical elements
- shifting spatial and dynamic landscapes
- new musical motifs and gestures

The main aim of this Antarctic composition was to capture and reflect the relationship between a remote community and the continent it embraces. I wanted to create an impression of the whole through the collage of discreet events, enabling the audience to experience a three dimensional, surround sound interpretation of my experience of this continent. I attempted to stay clear of a pure documentary style, however the film ‘Etre et Avoir’ was influential. [The film’s use of interior and exterior sequences shot over a year, informs a fuller impression of life in and around the small school community]

The sound objects eventually selected contained complex musical organisation, development, imagery, and elements of the language of electroacoustic music. The composition therefore became the careful selection and presentation of these sounds into a unified piece of sound art.

While considered how my residency and the sound recordings had taken place on a continent entirely dominated by natural forces, I decided that the organisation of the piece should pertain to a natural order: to this end I used the ratio PHI 1:1.618 (sometimes called the ‘Golden section’ or the ‘Divine proportion’. This ratio can be found dominating the formal dimensions of nature - snail shells, fern leaves, human body, and has been used by many artists and composers through the years: Bartok, Debussy, Webern, Gubaidulina, Beethoven, Mozart.

It was using this ratio that I sectioned and organised the formal structures of Antarctica. The whole piece was divided and sub-divided using PHI to create smaller sections where the inner organisation of sound objects and fragments also adhered to the ratio.

“Antarctica is part documentary, part wildlife experience; an insight into the lives, fears, dreams and wishes of the people who live and work in Antarctica. It is also, most profoundly, one person’s reaction to the extraordinary experience of a prolonged stay on the frozen continent. All this is woven into a complex musical web, sometimes like a film soundtrack, sometimes a radio play, sometimes a nature documentary - a voyage of discovery and excitement through one of the last remaining natural places on the planet, where the marks of human society are overwhelmed by the forces of nature.” Tony Myatt, Director of music technology research, University of York.

ANTARCTIC LEGACY
The research and artistic enquiry in Antarctica, has had a lasting and profound effect on many aspects of my life, especially artistic and professional. It has generated several significant projects including the compositions and films that are to be found on the DVD/Book Antarctica Musical Images from the Frozen Continent.

In 2005 my project Singing Ringing Buoy was shortlisted for £50,000 PRS Foundation New Music Award and was judges runner-up. This project inspired by the deep sea monitoring research of the Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory I witnessed onboard the JCR, samples the sound of an offshore buoy as it interacts with the weather and sea. A composition is then realised in real time using the effecting weather and sea data as parameters. This is then broadcast as a surround sound installation.
Another, wholly unexpected, project generated from the Antarctic residency was the commission of *Play: Antarctica* by the Unicorn Theatre for Children in London. This production is an adaptation of my three month residency in Antarctica for anyone aged 8+, and explores the use of story telling through surround sound, live music, film projection, object manipulation, and acting.

**LINKS**
- British Antarctic Survey: www.antarctica.ac.uk
- Arts Council England: www.arts council.org.uk
- Unicorn Theatre: www.unicorntheatre.com
- Guardian newspaper Antarctic diaries: www.guardian.co.uk/antarctic/year
- Craig Year’s website: www.ev2.co.uk

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**D. H. LAWRENCE & THE HEROIC AGE OF POLAR EXPLORATION**

*By Tina Ferris*

This paper began as a quest for a reference to Shackleton within the voluminous works of British author D. H. Lawrence. After having watched the A&E production of *Shackleton* (2002) portraying the heroic ordeal of the *Endurance* expedition and reading Huntford’s biography, I developed a sudden enthusiasm for Shackleton and all things polar related. I later had the privilege of viewing Frank Hurley’s marvelous prints and a full size replica of the *James Caird* at an exhibit in the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. I suppose I was also struck by the coincidence of actor Kenneth Branagh playing both the roles of Shackleton and the young Lawrence in the film *Coming Through* (1993). As a long time student of Lawrence, I couldn’t resist the temptation of linking these two obsessions of mine. Lawrence, the miner’s son from Eastwood in Nottinghamshire, is a writer more often associated with controversial stories of sex, class, and the onslaught of industrialization. But his range was broader than that, including a love of travel and adventure. And he was astutely aware of the changing world around him.

Lawrence’s life (1885-1930) spans the “Heroic Age” of discovery when polar exploration was an incredible hardship conducted by brave men facing a brutal climate and isolated from the rest of humanity. Earlier explorers had practical aims of finding useable trade routes or opening new seal and whale hunting territory. But the Heroic Age of Polar Exploration was centered on the Poles themselves, beginning with the pioneering techniques of Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen. Out of necessity, these Pole-seekers had to rely on their own wits and stamina to accomplish deeds of glory in the name of their country. They, in turn, were the celebrities of the day and further linked heroism with self-sacrifice.

Approaching the turn of the century, more was known about the moon than about either of the Earth’s Poles. They were the last mysterious gaps of knowledge on the geographical map. In 1895, while Lawrence was still a boy, the Sixth International Geophysical Conference in London sparked renewed interest in the South Pole, and polar exploration in general, by declaring it the most important goal. This launched the race to both Poles with several key explorers dominating the field. Britain played a significant role forging the way for others through the Antarctic expeditions of Robert F. Scott and Ernest Shackleton, both of whom are mentioned by Lawrence around the time he was launching his own writing career. The Americans Robert E. Peary and Dr. Frederick A. Cook vied for the honor of “winning” the North Pole as their prize resulting in a long, bitter conflict known as “The Polar Controversy.” A few years later, Roald
Amundsen from Norway, already famous for having been first to sail the Northwest Passage, quietly and efficiently achieved the South Pole, leaving the British stunned. Toward the end of Lawrence’s life, Umberto Nobile from Italy and Richard E. Byrd from America ushered polar exploration into the modern age by the use of radio and flight, thus closing the chapter on the Heroic Age of Polar Exploration.

This flurry of polar activity around the turn of the century became the hot topic of conversation, created attention grabbing headlines for the press and imaginative fodder for writers and artists. “Boys adventures” frequently contained heroic polar quests and survival stories laced with bits of natural history. Illustrations and advertisements with polar themes were prevalent, as were political cartoons that wryly commented on the frenzy of the polar race.

Chocolate and tobacco trading cards featured sets of polar explorers and famous expedition ships. Girls played with Eskimo dolls. Even parlor games allowed families to vicariously share in the polar adventure, such as Hamley’s “To the Pole with Shackleton” (circa 1910). The “Polarmania” of popular culture was in full swing during Lawrence’s childhood. The aura surrounding the competition of polar explorers can easily be likened to the spotlight on astronauts and cosmonauts of the 1960’s moon race, where courageous deeds of a few colorful individuals generated an exuberant national pride. Exploration of exotic, unseen lands meant both risk and wonder. The Poles were “the pivot at the bottom of the schoolroom globe, around which you spin your fantasies of travel and adventure” (Fox 108).

Already classic works of literature had attempted to define this unknown region and establish its symbolism, a tradition that leaned toward the gothic and the sublime. Around 1907 Lawrence had read “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by Samuel T. Coleridge with its “wondrous cold” of “mist and snow,” glacial cliffs that “split with a thunder-fit,” and “ice, mast-high” that “came floating by, / As green as emerald” (10-14). He’d also read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, which has an opening scene with the young heroine hiding in a curtained window-seat on a winter afternoon. She’s escaping into her favorite natural history book filled with pictures of birds and “the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space,—that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the pole and centre the multiplied rigors of extreme cold’” (14). This passage sets the tone for the entire novel—a lone soul that must navigate through a cold and perilous world, bravely enduring hardships that test her integrity. By 1918 Lawrence was familiar with Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), with its polar narrative frame mirroring the Faustian hubris of Dr. Frankenstein’s manipulation of nature and “the ‘sexy’ lure of scientific penetration” (xlvii). Dr. Frankenstein is chasing his monstrous creation on dogsled across the Arctic ice when he is rescued by a ship bound for the North Pole. He then relates his tragic history to Captain Walton who has a similar obsessive and “burning ardour” for knowledge. The monster ultimately seeks out the northern most spot to end his life and wipe out all traces of his existence. Lawrence was also acquainted with a collection of 46 tales by Edgar Alien Poe, where he’d likely have been exposed to several polar stories. “Hans Phaall: A Tale” (1835) takes a balloon flight over the North Pole imagined as a blackened depression or sinkhole ringed by an immense unbroken ice field. The narrator of the “Ms. Found in a Bottle” (1833) is caught in a tidal storm and washed southward until he is pitched onto a supernatural ship with the word “DISCOVERY” spelled out in tar on its sail. The ship is filled with aged explorers surrounded by “mouldering instruments of science, and obsolete long-forgotten charts” who are so single-minded in their pursuit of the ideal that they take no notice of their new passenger (141). They are all about to be sucked down into a polar whirlpool, and yet their expression is one of eager attraction to forbidden knowledge. Likewise, Poe’s only novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838) stops just short of his plunging into “the embraces of the cataract, where a chasm threw itself open to receive us” (467) in the South Pole’s warm albino ocean.
The polar imagery in Poe’s tales supports the pseudo-scientific theories of the self educated American, Captain John Cleves Symmes. His elaborate conjectures during the 1820s about a hollow inhabitable Earth with polar access was ridiculed by the scientific community but became inspiration for much fiction, including works by Jules Verne (such as *Journey to the Center of the Earth, The Adventures of Captain Hatteras, and An Antarctic Mystery*) and Edgar Rice Burroughs’ Pellucidar series beginning with the novel *At the Earth’s Core*. These works, like Poe’s, were based on legends of the warm “Open Sea” of Hyperborea and “Symmes’ Holes” and helped introduce the “hollow Earth” theory to the mainstream public. The world was closing in; and the Poles represented a last virginal refuge for frontier expansion on Earth, a hoped for gateway to inner nested worlds to conquer. Symmes offered a retreat into a fertile yet comforting Earth womb. However, Francis Spufford points out that Poe imagines polar entries that “exert a lethal downwards pull”:

They compel surrender rather than inviting a new Columbus to probe them boldly. They may well close behind the unresisting bodies of the sailors they have captured. They are, so to speak, holes with teeth... a delicious dissolution, sex and death fused... (76)

This type of polar symbolism could hardly have escaped Lawrence’s notice, for as literary critic L. D. Clark points out, “Lawrence was himself a great reader of travel and adventure books” and often used the geographical landscape to carry out “an exploration of strange lands synonymous with the exploration of self (5, xxii). The Poles provided a frame for his dualistic thinking.

In addition, Lawrence had experienced through his own travels glimpses of Alpine glaciers during Swiss walking-tours, snow-bound ranch life in the high desert of New Mexico (where he wintered with two Danes and talked of a trip to Greenland), and even witnessed the symbolic albatross. Referring to a passage in Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Lawrence claims, “Well, I have seen an albatross too: following us in waters hard upon the Antarctic.... No one knows till they have tried how lost, how lonely those southern waters are” (SCAL 138). Lawrence the “thought-adventurer” was an explorer at heart. He would have naturally absorbed and processed the polar mythos into his own developing personal philosophy. Therefore, it’s no wonder that he took at least a casual interest in polar exploration since Lawrence in turn put arctic imagery to effective use in his own works. He had a wealth of imaginative literary speculation behind him and an influx of dramatic real life polar events making news in the foreground.

One of Lawrence’s earliest polar references is in a draft of “Delilah and Mr. Bircumshaw” composed around 1910. Mrs. Bircumshaw, who has just made fun of her husband’s performance as a Magi in a Christmas pageant, reflects on his potential:

Such a frame for <physi> work he had, and nothing to do but <bank> clerking and occasional tennis. Often, as he put on the jacket of his pyjamas, she thought, ‘If only he went with Lieutenant Shackleton discovering the South Pole...he’d be splendid.’ For she really loved him. (LAH 194)

Mr. Bircumshaw is full of “unspent energy turning sour in his veins, and a fair amount of barren leisure torturing his soul” (144). He needs “something to accomplish,” or to “be somebody’s hero” in order to feed his self-esteem (195). Instead, he confuses heroism with “brute tyranny” (149). Lawrence’s choice of the Anglo-Irishman, Ernest Shackleton, over his contemporary, Robert Scott, as the prime example of a “splendid” man of action is quite telling.

Shackleton had been with Scott on the Antarctic *Discovery* expedition (1901-04), but they soon had a clash of personalities and became rivals. Shackleton’s next expedition aboard *Nimrod* (1907-09) had
been much more successful even though it made some of the same mistakes. British expeditions were consistently plagued by a lack of preparation and inexperience with the foreign techniques of cross-country skiing and dogsled handling. They often resorted to trudging on foot through knee-deep snow while pulling heavily loaded sledges in harness. The British attitude of moral worth was based on physical health and natural aptitude. They didn’t let “pets” haul their supplies or get pulled along on skis; real men walked to the Pole struggling under their own power.

Still Shackleton’s accomplishments were significant enough to warrant his becoming knighted, and his exciting exploits would have made an effective counterpoint to the story’s Christmas pageant seen by Mrs. Bircumshaw as “unworthy” and “not manly, somehow” (146). At that time, not only had Shackleton achieved the record for “Furthest South” (to within nearly 100 miles of the Pole) and accumulated a wealth of scientific and geographical data, but he also had a charismatic personality and was, therefore, more popular than Scott with the British public. Shackleton’s intensity was in line with the typical Lawrentian character. It was only after Scott’s martyred death on the Terra Nova expedition (1910-13) that Scott took center stage as more accurately representing heroic failure to a nation in decline. Found frozen in their tent just eleven miles from a supply depot, Scott and his men left a shocking yet romantic image that overshadowed Shackleton.

Since “Delilah and Mr. Bircumshaw” was rewritten in 1912, after news of Scott’s defeat, Lawrence may have realized that the British polar explorer was no longer an appropriate symbol for his story if all that these men accomplished was a bumbling 2nd Place in a petty race or self-glorifying death. Amundsen’s From expedition (1910-12), which had secretly shifted its goal from the Arctic to the Antarctic, snatched the South Pole out from under the British, arriving five weeks ahead of Scott. Summing up the British reaction to Amundsen’s shrewd polar-switch, one of Scott’s crewmen stated: “Nothing makes a more unpleasant impression than a feint…. The moment Scott saw the Norwegian tent he knew that he had nothing to tell that was not already known…. The Polar Journey was literally laid waste: that was the shock that staggered them” (Cherry-Garrard 528). Little Norway had reached the “Home of the Pole” (or Polheim) first.

Adding to British embarrassment, Amundsen had made it all seem too easy. Inspired by Nansen’s crossing of Greenland in 1888, Amundsen systematically spent his life preparing to be a polar explorer. He believed the key to success was quality sled-dogs and knowing how to handle them. He adopted the Inuit style of clothing. He had plenty of food stored in well-marked caches and recruited a cross-country ski champion for his polar party. Plus he meticulously planned each stage of the trip, improving equipment as needed and accounting for every imaginable contingency. Ultimately, the prideful British and their man-hauling death-march were shown up by a Norwegian team that demonstrated expertise with snow travel as if on an extended “sporting stunt.” This was too painfully humiliating to act as a tonic for Mr. Bircumshaw.

And yet the story’s initial use of Shackleton was an astute choice, after all, given Lawrence’s interest in leadership themes, because history would eventually show that Shackleton was an exemplary leader in times of crisis. He sported an optimistic and amiable authority with none of Scott’s moody self-doubt or rigid adherence to naval rank and was admired by his crew who affectionately called him “The Boss.” Sir Shackleton, in the role of “Polar-Magi” bringing gifts of knowledge to the world, would have made a sharp contrast to the play-acting, poutiness, and ineffectual bullying of Mr. Bircumshaw. Shackleton’s ambition was tempered by a patriarchal tenderness and lively sense of humor. Reaching the Pole was an important goal but so was the health and morale of his team. When supplies ran thin on the Nimrod expedition, responsibility for the crewmen’s welfare became paramount; and Shackleton possessed confidence in knowing instinctively when to turn back. Roland Huntford remarks in his biography that “Shackleton had stopped with the goal within his grasp, one of the bravest acts in the history of polar
exploration. When his wife asked him how he found the strength of will to turn, he answered: ‘I thought you would rather have a live donkey than a dead lion’” (Last Place 233). Like Lawrence, Shackleton was grounded enough to believe that life trumps idealism.

The reference to Shackleton through the character of Mrs. Bircumshaw also fits nicely with Spufford’s supposition that polar exploration especially appealed to Victorian women because it suggested a moral purity, as well as a sort of sympathetic equivalence between mariners surviving the huge indifference and overmastering cold of the Arctic, and the travails of a lonely governess amidst a chilly household. It meant that Arctic heroism, strangely, was relevant heroism, with the natural environment of the poles compelling men to wait, suffer, and be patient, in the same way as the human environment compelled women... an ennobling translation of everyday struggles. (103)

The final scene of the story has Mr. and Mrs. Bircumshaw in bed as if stranded together on an ice-floe with an angry silence whirling around them. Her last thought as she watches him eat in the dark, that “Nothing on earth is so vital to him as a meal” (151), might have evoked the starvation of isolated polar explorers huddled in their tent if Lawrence had left the earlier reference to Shackleton and the South Pole. Mr. Bircumshaw would be seen as indeed braving the Antarctic cold of the domestic landscape.

Lawrence, who was currently going through the struggles of his elopement with Frieda Weekley, also identified with Scott’s plight. The telegram announcing Scott’s death to the world was sent February 10, 1913. A week later Lawrence wrote a letter to his friend and mentor, Edward Garnett, discussing lawyers, Frieda’s visitation rights to her children, and their penniless isolation in Italy. This he compares to the stripped existence of Scott’s final trek across Antarctica, returning from the Pole:

We gather strength from the Captain Scott. And somehow, translating him from Italian newspapers makes him more poignant.

It always frightens me how life gets reduced down and down to fewer elements the further one goes: Captain Scott had cold, hunger, and death. I’ve got love—which is Frieda—and the care because of providing for us to live—and nothing more. All the rest has become accessory, after these six months here alone. (IL 517)

Due to the many articles and diaries being published about Scott’s ill-fated Terra Nova expedition, the image of a frozen wasteland and the gruesome details of suffering, deprivation, and exposure remained fresh in the public’s mind when Women in Love was published in 1920. It would have been fresher still in the mind of the author who conceived of protagonist Gerald Crich’s icy death in 1916.

In particular, the fate of one of Scott’s crewman on the polar trek closely echoes Crich’s final scene and may have provided partial inspiration for his solitary walk across the Alpine slopes. Lawrence (Titus) Gates, who had served as an officer of the dragoons in the Second Boer War, was selected for the expedition because, like Crich, he was a wealthy, experienced horseman. Unfortunately, when confronted with the frigid Antarctic, Gates and his old war wounds didn’t fare any better than the sledge horses in his charge. Scott’s diary, which became a bestseller titled Scott’s Last Expedition (1913), describes how the rugged Gates, debilitated by scurvy and suffering severe frostbite, sacrificed himself without a word of complaint. He simply left the tent in the middle of a blizzard and wandered off onto the ice-fields like a dying animal. Gates reportedly said on the way out, “I am just going outside and may be some time.” Scott records that “We knew that poor Gates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman” (430). The tale of Captain Gates quickly came to represent the epitome of British heroism and thus endured as one of the primary legends of the South Pole tragedy.
Women in Love, however, makes allusions to the North Pole rather than the South, which is
more in keeping with Lawrence’s philosophy equating the extreme north with a cold and barren
over self-consciousness. Lawrence contrasts the spiritual Arctic north and its “vast abstraction
of ice and snow” with a sensual equatorial Africa and its “putrescent mystery of sun-rays”
(254). Gudrun Brangwen upon first seeing Gerald Crich is impressed that “he looked so new,
unbroached, pure as an arctic thing,” and she admires his “clear northern flesh and his fair
hair” that has “a glisten like cold sunshine refracted through crystals of ice” (14). They are
kindred spirits, and she wonders if there is “some pale gold, arctic light that envelopes only us
two?” (15). Rupert Birkin also thinks of his friend Gerald in similar Arctic terms:

> He was one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the
destructive frost-mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this knowledge, this one
process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold? Was he a messenger, an omen of the
universal dissolution into whiteness and snow? (254)

The answer is of course, yes, Gerald dies like Scott’s party-as a sacrificial initiate crossing the
boundary between warm life and cold death. Keith Sagar remarks that “There is also a scientific
basis for such imagery, as Lawrence was well aware, in Clausius’ theory of entropic decay,
leading ultimately, to the world’s ‘death by perfect cold’ as depicted by Wells in The Time
Machine” (162). Foreshadowing his fate, Gerald feels his own life winding down and “something
icy gathering at his heart.... a sheath of pure ice” (460). Like the ultimate pole-seeker, “Gerald
had penetrated all the outer places of Gudrun’s soul,” freezing to death in the process (451).

Gudrun, too, was a frustrated explorer with no territory left to claim. Lawrence writes: “Knowing
him finally she was the Alexander seeking new worlds.—But there were no new worlds, there
were no more men... The world was finished now, for her” (452). In typical Symmesian “hollow
Earth” tradition, Lawrence creates a shut-in valley with its eternal “cradle of snow” as the
setting for the climactic final chapters, a polar-like navel for Gudrun to retreat into, thus opening
a new frontier of mystic knowledge:

> she wanted to climb the wall of white finality, climb over, into the peaks that sprang up
like sharp petals in the heart of the frozen, mysterious navel of the world. She felt that
there... in the infolded navel of it all, was her consummation.... the sleeping, timeless,
frozen centre of the All. (410)

Gudrun is ignoring the flux of life by seeking after the static polar-navel. This creates an
imbalance; relationships break apart. Such obsessive individuality leads to Loerke’s “dream of
fear,” an apocalyptic vision where “the world went cold, and snow fell everywhere, and only
white creatures, polar-bears, white foxes, and men like awful white snow-birds, persisted in ice
cruelty” (453). Add to that the polar equipment of skis and sledges with which Gerald and
Gudrun attempt to conquer the snowy mountain, and the tale’s end closely echoes Scott’s as a
“barren tragedy” (476). Scott and Gerald choose death, while Shackleton and Birkin turn back
toward life.

In “The Man Who Loved Islands,” Lawrence takes the “snow-abstract annihilation” and burial
to extremes as he borrows polar imagery to convey the story of a man’s self-implosion. Through
the succession of smaller and smaller islands, Cathcart, a Man-who-would-be-Master, gets
reduced down just as Scott. Written in 1926, this is Lawrence’s earlier fear of an attenuated life
played out. Cathcart ends up living alone in a small, primitive hut he’s built with “big pebbles
from the shingle beach” (WWRA 167). And his meager possessions are the same sort that could
be found at “Hut Point,” an Antarctic base-camp, or Dr. Cook’s supply hut at Annoatok, an
Eskimo village in Greenland. Cathcart’s bland diet of dried milk, bacon and porridge cooked
on a “paraffin stove” is comparable to the pemmican mush called “hoosh” that was a staple of
polar explorers. (The smokeless paraffin camp stove, or Primus, was invented in 1892 by a
Swede and quickly became standard equipment on polar expeditions.) Thus Cathcart’s third
island, his “few acres of rock away in the north, on the outer fringe of the isles,” (165) is described
in terms of a subarctic campout.
Cathcart’s island quest for an insular spot disconnected from all life is not unlike the North or South Pole. What was it these men expected to find there? Even Amundsen remarked on the uncomfortable anticlimax of finally reaching the South Pole, as Huntford relates:

The Poles are Looking-Glass world; a graphic illustration of how the ideal, necessarily, means a reduction to absurdity. Familiar concepts break down. There is only one direction; at the North Pole, South; at the South Pole, North. The meridians converge to vanishing point, so that longitude is meaningless, and only latitude remains. Fixing the position of this strange spot is an alien and arduous exercise. (Last Place 471)

Cathcart grows more and more agitated as he likewise experiences a “reduction to absurdity.” His obsession leaves him fragmented and totally alone, for as Sagar points out, “to be a fully fledged idealist is to be a nihilist” (291). The sheep are sent away and even the birds have flown south leaving only brief glimpses of seals in the bay. Hallucinations and mirages take over as time and space lose all meaning for him. There is no color, no trees or foliage except for sea-weed, “tiny turf-plants, and the sedge by the pool,” no distinction of landscape as the endless snow blankets everything, no seasonal changes, no clear definition between day and night, only numbness and “damp, twilit, sea-washed space!” (WWRA 167, 170). Strangely, Cathcart feels safest during storms when the rough seas offer protection from outside contact “like eternal ramparts round his island” (170). Lawrence writes:

He had reduced himself to a single point in space, and a point being that which has neither length nor breadth, he had to step off it into somewhere else. Just as you must step into the sea, if the waters wash your foothold away, so he had, at night, to step off into the otherworld of undying time. (153)

Lawrence appears to have grasped the strange effects of sensory deprivation in the remote Arctic climate where the soul feels trapped without perspective in an awful cold white expanse, lethargic and unable to move as if smothered under a heavy drift of snow.

And yet freezing to death was portrayed in public accounts of polar tragedies as a quiet, peaceful death that left the body whole and intact as well as the integrity of the individual untainted. Still Cathcart struggles to assert himself against this barren void:

at times the snow overcame him. It fell on him, and he lay buried and lifeless. Yet every time, he struggled alive before it was too late, and fell upon the snow with the energy of fever. Exhausted, he would not give in.... He must conquer the snow, this new, white brute force which had accumulated against him. (172)

As Lawrence points out, “You can’t win against the elements” (173), especially not by willfully ignoring nature and trying to apply a feverish spirit to possess or conquer it. One of the main faults of the British expeditions was a lack of understanding or respect for the unpredictable scope of nature, which left them with unworkable timetables and minimum safety margins. Aware of this modern tendency to feel superior, Lawrence used subarctic isolation and exposure as a warning to those unable to connect with a world outside themselves. Clark notes, “This story marks the end of that sort of stark white death in Lawrence’s writing” (359).

Lawrence would continue, however, to make polar references in various essays, particularly during the mid 1920s. We can witness Lawrence’s own adventurous spirit in his travel book, Sea and Sardinia (1921), which is laced with a subtle polar imagery. He describes the maneuvering of his rowboat through the crowded quay as working “her way out...like a boat through pack-ice” (SS 25). The air is filled with seagulls that “whirl like a few flakes of snow in the upper chill air” (29). Upon reaching Sardinia, he says, “Magic are high lands seen from the sea, when they are far, far off, and ghostly translucent like ice-bergs” (48). He speaks of certain native black-haired Sardinians as “the esquimo type, simple, frank and amiable” and compares their curious “dark eyes that seem alert” to that of seals (68, 38). Lawrence believed the Esquimo were among the races of people who might possess a “natural aristocracy” because of their relationship to the land (RDP 367). Lawrence and his wife must cope with discomforts while admiring the beauty of the island. The town of Cagliari is described as “deadly cold, and the wind like a flat
blade of ice” (SS 63). Then on their way to Terranova, appropriately meaning “New Land,” Lawrence imagines a polar landscape perhaps inspired by the fact that Captain Scott had a ship by that name. Tired out from the long bus ride, Lawrence experiences what it must have felt like for explorers to first glimpse the relief ships that would carry them back to civilization. He writes, “it looked in the powerful glow of the sunset like some lonely steamer laid up in some land-locked bay away at Spitzbergen, towards the North Pole: a solemn, mysterious, blue-landed bay, lost, lost to mankind” (160). Spitzbergen is a group of Norwegian islands in the Arctic Ocean that was used as a jumping off point for North Pole expeditions. Lawrence’s description of the coast as “still forsaken, outside of the world’s life” continues the desolate Arctic theme by conjuring visions of “dead,” ice-trapped ships guarded by a silent, stealthy hill like a “lumpish berg” (160, 162). Having taken this step out of Time, the restless Lawrence completes his Sardinian journey with a return to “a new world on the mainland” where he can once more read the newspaper “from end to end” and catch up with the lively stream of current events (170). Polar explorers were always eager for news after their years of isolation and were often shocked to be confronted by political changes or war. Sea and Sardinia with its rally call of “Andiamo” contains Lawrence’s most positive use of polar symbols, adding a sense of wide-eyed wonder as might be experienced firsthand from the explorer’s view point.

More often, however, Lawrence laments the fact that the “world is discovered from pole to pole” (PM 141). Lawrence writes in his 1924 essay “Pan in America,” “Once you have conquered a thing, you have lost it. Its real relation to you collapses... What’s the good of conquering even the North Pole, if after the conquest you’ve nothing left but an inert fact?” (P 29). Reverence and awe for nature disappear as the pagan god Pan is chased even from this last frozen retreat. Certainly the continuing squabble over the North Pole between American explorers Frederick Cook and Robert Peary didn’t bode well for the worth of the enterprise.

Lawrence was sure to have been aware of this “Polar Controversy” since it was a complex and passionate dispute with worldwide media coverage that lasted most of his lifetime. Both explorers claimed the Pole within a week of each other, Cook stating he’d reached the Pole a year earlier on April 21 of 1908 but had been forced to winter-over in a cave on Devon Island before he could get word out. Cook had sold his exclusive story to the New York Herald while the New York Times had the rights to Peary’s. Thus the two rival newspapers joined the fray with front page assaults. Peary, desperate for fame and believing his previous attempts gave him a proprietary stake in the North Pole, then attempted to discredit Cook using clout from the Peary Arctic Club. Questions cropped up about Cook’s 1906 ascent of Alaska’s Mt. McKinley (the highest peak in North America), revealing it to be a hoax complete with falsified photos from the summit of a smaller mountain nearby. Unfortunately, a flair for dramatic embellishments left Cook vulnerable to his enemies and undermined his earlier true accomplishments.

When Cook was convicted of mail fraud in 1923 on a dubious oil stock scheme and sentenced to Leavenworth prison, this seemed to prove him an untrustworthy “crook.” Dr. Cook was again blasted in newspaper headlines during the lengthy trial process, but he continued to stand by his polar claim even from prison. The question remains today whether either Cook or Peary succeeded in reaching the North Pole since neither provided adequate, timely proof, and what slack documents were finally given contained inconsistencies and exaggerated estimates. Thus it came down to whose word was more believable. Fergus Fleming remarks, “Instead of a clear-cut victory, or even a clear-cut disaster,... the world had to deal with a prolonged and increasingly tedious controversy” (385). In addition, these back and forth libelous accusations of fraud and harassment tarnished explorer reputations, in general. Just as Peary’s victory telegram crowed “Stars and Stripes nailed to the Pole” (375), the prospect of a “Polar Swindle” got pinned to the U.S. flag. It’s no wonder that the North Pole would have left a negative impression on Lawrence, particularly while he was living in America. And disillusionment with formerly heroic role-models during the Cook trial would help explain Lawrence’s numerous jabs at the North Pole around this time.
Several more of Lawrence’s essays mention how humans have invaded and defiled the purity of the wilderness leaving a “Known World” that lacks a sense of adventure. He says in “Climbing Down Pisgah,” “The aeroplane descends and lays her egg-shells of empty tin cans on the top of Everest, in the Ultimate Thule, and all over the North Pole ... the same addled eggs of our civilisation, tin cans, in every camp-nest” (RDP 226-27). The “tin cans” could apply not only to the litter of broken campsites but also to the trail of flagged food depots that polar explorers would set out along the proposed route. Tin cans before and aft—explorers tramping about and devouring the secrets of the cosmos like caches of tasteless prepackaged food. Along this same idea, Lawrence writes in “The Crown” essay, “the supreme little ego in man hates an unconquered universe. We shall never rest till we have heaped tin cans on the North Pole and the South Pole, and put up barb-wire fences on the moon” (281). He envisions these expanses of unclaimed territory—no matter how worthless and uninviting—as carved up for possession. And yet Lawrence believes, “We’ve been so busy finding the North Pole,” we are avoiding a greater discovery of the “darkest Africa inside us” (STH 202). Echoing a similar opinion expressed by Henry David Thoreau in *Walden,* he regrets that we are deaf to our own inner feelings which desperately need exploring. The search for the Poles is seen in the essay “The Novel and the Feelings” as a distraction, an outward search to avoid the terra incognita of the inward journey. Now that there are virtually “no wilds left,” Lawrence concludes that the last adventure would appear to be “far down in our own forests of dark veins” (204, 205).

It’s curious that most of these “American essays” are clustered around the period of time when the old, primitive ways of polar exploration were becoming obsolete. Shackleton’s death in January of 1922 aboard his ship the *Quest,* as he was about to embark on his fourth expedition, is considered by many as marking the end of the Heroic Age of Polar Exploration. He was only 47 years old when he suffered a fatal heart attack and was buried in a Norwegian whaler’s cemetery at Grytviken on South Georgia Island in the Antarctic. Contrary to tradition, his head points south towards the Pole, persistently holding on to the dream he never quite reached. Shackleton’s family motto, *Fortitudine Vincimus:* “By endurance we conquer,” could just as easily have stood for all the explorers of the Heroic Age. Technology in the form of snow-tractors, planes, and Marconi’s wireless short-wave radio would become the new heroes. But once the Poles were conquered, charted, and flown-over, then what?

Lawrence seems to have admired the courage of the polar explorers and men of action on an individual level and followed the reports of their accomplishments overtime. It’s been suggested that the drive behind polar quests in the Heroic Age included a yearning for a pristine, primeval world that could act as “a romantic antidote to the spread of industrialism” (Fox 183). Lawrence might have shared that sentiment. However, he often used polar exploration symbolically in his works as a negative trend, a further example of the over-emphasis on cold facts, acquisition, egotism, and political power in an industrial age. The passionate struggle toward truth by a few, unfortunately, strips away Earth’s mystery for the passive and apathetic masses. Lawrence would have likely preferred to let everyone explore the world firsthand and keep the Polar Regions playfully ambiguous. However, his own polar interest and early hero worship of explorers like Shackleton resonates through his entire body of works, even if that idealism eventually faded somewhat.

**Selected Bibliography**


Walter How –
An Agreeable And Competent Little Chap.

One of the unexpected privileges of living in North Norfolk is meeting some very interesting people. Sometimes they become good friends. One such example is when I was informed that the niece of Walter How just happened to live in a neighbouring village! I couldn’t believe it - and I couldn’t wait to meet her.

Grace Turzig is a delightful lady, now in her very early eighties but with the looks and a liveliness of someone much younger. Mention the words ‘Ernest Shackleton’ and her smile radiates the room! She tells me that she used to sit and listen to her Uncle Walter’s stories of the Endurance expedition and learn of the aging former able seaman’s total admiration for his leader, or the ‘Boss’. Clearly, Grace has embraced her uncle’s high regard for Shackleton in her own life. On many occasions we have sat together chatting on polar matters, not least, about Shackleton’s extraordinary escapades on the sea and ice between 1914 -16.

Walter How was born on Christmas Day 1885 in Bermondsey, London, England. Amongst his early (and enduring) talents was his obvious ability to draw and sketch. His life is littered with (mainly nautical) images. His many illustrations served Margery and James Fisher well in their well-received biography of Shackleton in 1957.

The young Walter was educated at Boxmoor and went to sea at a very tender age. He served on numerous sailing vessels, presumably sailing out of London Port to relatively local destinations. Eventually, his seafaring took him further a field, to Labrador and, of course, the Antarctic (or, at least as far as the Weddell Sea!). Under the able leadership of Frank Wild, How played his part on Elephant Island. No one, it seems, had a bad word to say about him. After the Endurance expedition, he joined the Merchant Navy but, sadly, was blinded in one eye when one of the ships he was crewing was hit by a German mine. He gained two naval medals for his Great War efforts. At the end of the war, he returned to London and the harsh reality of national economic decline. He engaged in various paid activities, to include, lampshade making and, perhaps inevitably, painting and decorating (of the building kind, that is).

Walter was a veritable Handy Andy both in the Great White South and at home. He could turn his hand to most things, including model-making, more particularly, the ‘ship in a bottle’ variety. It should be noted that in October 2001 (or thereabouts) the How family donated a half model of the Endurance made by Uncle Walter to the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, England. To this day, it remains on display in a glass case he made also. (See page 66)

In 1922 How volunteered to sail south again, with Shackleton as a crew member on Quest. Unfortunately, he was forced to withdraw due to the death of his father, days before the ship was to depart from Plymouth.

How never lost his love for the sea and, in 1929, he commanded the yacht The Macheeb owned by the famous Beecham family, cruising around the Scottish islands.

In 1930, he became caretaker of the vessel Friendship – a post he held for 9 years until the outbreak of the Second War. As war broke out he transferred to the Tottenham Gas Company, retiring from there at the age of 65 (circa 1950).

Ever since his Antarctic journeys ended, How stayed in touch with numerous Shackletonian shipmates, notably through the auspices of the Antarctic Club in London, England (happily, the AC is still thriving today!). Close buddies included, Bakewell and Greenstreet. Every Christmas, Uncle How would send close family members a personalized card from the AC,
complete with a unique photograph of Antarctica, taken from the original (in some instances Hurley) negatives.

On 2nd October 1968 Walter went to Portsmouth and met up with Lionel Greenstreet and Charlie Green – the three last surviving members of the Endurance expedition. The occasion was to celebrate the commissioning of the Royal Navy’s new Antarctic survey ship – H.M.S. Endurance. In October 1970 he stood on the dock to welcome the ship back from its tour down south, complete with 12 offices, 106 crew and 2 helicopters – a far cry from 1914!

Grace tells me that her uncle tended to talk little of his polar experiences to family. He was, when all said and done, a quiet man – not one to broadcast his exploits to all and sundry. Unlike most of her siblings, Grace would ask Uncle Walter about Shackleton and Elephant Island and he would oblige. I can only assume he did so with the same smile his youngest niece learned to emulate.

As you will discover from Grace’s reminiscences (see on), Walter How thought the world of Shackleton, he is reputed to have said of his leader, ‘He was a man among men’. Truly an accolade the Boss would have enjoyed.

Following a battle with cancer, Uncle Walter bowed to the inevitable and passed away on 5th August 1972, at the ripe old age of 86.

A little while ago, I asked Grace if she would write down a few observations and thoughts. This is what she sent me...

“Walter How married Ellen Varey and had 3 daughters – Florence, Doris and Edna. Edna died as a young child, from an illness prevalent amongst children in those times.

My mother used to recall the times when he (Walter) himself was a child. Apparently, he was always ready for a laugh and a bit of fun. When very young he started drawing ships, capstans, odd bits of rope and tackle. He was fascinated by sailing, ships and the great beyond – not surprising as one of his cousins was a sailor.

As a boy he went to sea and, by the time he grew up, had sailed most of the seas. That was what he wanted to do – and that is what he did!

Time on the Endurance has been well documented but I know he helped Bakewell to stow away Perce Blackboro. The three became great friends and corresponded with one another all their lives.

He, again with Bakewell, helped Hurley rescue some of the plates and film from the Endurance after it was crushed in the ice. He also ‘assisted’ Doctors McIlroy and Macklin when they amputated Blackboro’s toes. Quite what his role was, I don’t know – probably clearing up after them.

In Alfred Lansing’s book (‘Endurance’) he is described as ‘a soft-spoken, agreeable and competent little chap’.

In later years, Caroline Alexander wrote of him (in her book, ‘The Endurance’) as ‘an amateur painter and builder of ships in bottle – his detailed models and sketches of the Endurance betray that her lines were etched upon his memory. He was, also, one of the most loyal alumni of the expedition, going to great lengths to try to stay in touch with all hands’.

He could play the banjo and ukelele and is seen playing a ‘uke’ in one of Hurley’s photographs taken on the Endurance.***
Between the two world wars, life was very hard for many. Unemployment was extremely high and there was very little (financial) help available. I have heard my mother say that Walter walked the length and breadth of London looking for work. He walked the soles off the shoes on his feet.

In about 1954/5 (when Walter was about 70 years old) he wrote to Wilfred Pickles, who presented a TV show called, ‘Ask Pickles’, about the Endurance expedition. As a result, the local press (the ‘Tottenham and Edmonton Weekly Herald’) wrote a lengthy article about Mr Walter How ‘who had been sitting on one of the most exciting stories ever told’. He told the newspaper, ‘If I was a young man, I would go again’.

Following on from that, he was approached by James and Margery Fisher to recount his time on Shackleton’s expedition with a view to writing a book (‘Shackleton’). They duly arrived at his home with a TAPE RECORDER (such a piece of equipment was unbelievable in those days). I think their book was published in 1957. I wonder whether this tape still exists?

I well remember him telling me that, in his opinion, Shackleton was the greatest man who ever walked the earth

He, also, told me off one day after I had said that I didn’t like a certain item on the tea table – ‘If you were hungry, my girl, you would eat anything!’.

He was a great letter writer and, on one occasion, he entered another competition to describe the most terrifying moment of his life. Surprisingly, to me, the expedition to Antarctica didn’t get a mention. He reckoned the worst time was on a sailing ship which was marooned in the Doldrums for quite a long time. The supply of drinking water was fast running out and in those days there were no de-salination plants on board ship. He won the prize!

In response to an article in the Sunday Times (29th August 2004) written by Karen Goodwin in connection with Michael Smith’s book on Sir James Wordie (‘Sir James Wordie’ - see Book Reviews), in particular in relation to the possible assertion by Wordie that Shackleton’s men agreed a ‘code of honour’ not to discuss, in public, any grievances or ‘private matters’, (Chapter 8, Page 114) Grace has this to say –

“I am sure the ‘code of honour’ agreed between the men was not just empty words. I think the majority had the utmost admiration and faith in Shackleton. Tom Crean (who went with Scott in 1910 and Shackleton in 1914), wrote to an old shipmate, summarizing the months on the floes, ‘We had a hot time of it the last 12 months and I must say the Boss is a splendid gentleman and I done my duty towards him to the end’. Crean was said, by those who knew him, ‘to have admired Scott but loved Shackleton’. I know my uncle thought he was next to God! This is evident in, not only what he related to me in later years, but also in a competition he won, promoted by a magazine, telling of the best years of his life. He said,

‘My best years were 1914-16 in the Antarctic with the late Sir Ernest Shackleton. Despite the fact that our ship, the ‘Endurance’, was stuck and crushed in the ice, our little community of 28 men, drifting on the pack-ice, cut off from the rest of the world, was the most cheerful and optimistic crowd that I ever had the pleasure to sail with.

For over 12 months we lived mainly on what we killed – seal and penguin, so no meat coupons were necessary; no fuel and lighting restrictions (seal blubber answered this problem); no taxation or financial worries; no jazz music to drive one crackers. In fact (it was) a real paradise off the beaten track.

Thank goodness we were serving under a MAN who understood MEN!’
Such was his true feeling for Shackleton, he was prepared to go on his next expedition on the *Quest* in 1921. Sadly, his father (my grand-father) was dying and he chose to stay behind.

In October 2002, Grace wrote to Robert Headland (then archivist at SPRI) introducing herself and telling him that she had, in her possession, 11 Christmas cards sent to her immediate family from the Antarctic Club by her uncle. Uniquely, these cards included poignant (original) black and white photographs of the Antarctic. In addition, there were photos of the Weddell Sea Party (taken by Hurley); most of the crew at Puerta Arenas (just disembarked from the *Yelcho*); the last 6 survivors (How, Green, Bakewell, Macklin, Greenstreet and McIlroy) and the last 3 survivors (How, Greenstreet and Green). Generously, she pledged to give these items to SPRI for safe-keeping, ‘eventually’.

Further research into the activities of Walter How during 1914-16 should be carried out, in my view. From the little we can learn from our sources, to-date, this would seem to be worth pursuing. To my mind there is much to be gained from discovering more about the ‘lesser’ personalities of the famous polar expeditions. The ordinary lives of the crews and shore parties will tell, I am sure, of extraordinary men. In the *Daily Chronicle* (4th September 1916) Frank Wild was enthusiastic in his praise of certain officers and crew, including How who, with the others, showed ‘energy and ability’ as they survived the rigours and uncertainties of Elephant Island. Men such as these deserve our attention.

Stephen Scott-Fawcett

References

Michael Smith is drawn to admirable heroic Antarctic figures whose inner lives are not very scrutable; he has followed his biographies of Tom Crean and Captain Lawrence Oates with a third, the life of the formidable explorer and scientist Sir James Mann Wordie (1889-1962). This is in many ways a good book. There is much fascinating material about the Endurance expedition, and an appendix gives an abridged version of Wordie’s diary ‘The Weddell Sea Log’ made at the time, which is of particular interest to members of the James Caird Society for its account of the camps on the ice, the ordeal in the exposed boats and of the months the men spent marooned on Elephant Island. Wordie was an observant and highly intelligent man who possessed great Scottish rectitude. He also had Scottish reticence: a telling anecdote refers to his inhibiting Walter How’s loose reminiscent tongue at the reunion of Endurance survivors in 1955 by saying, “What’s going on here, How? Not telling tales out of school, I hope”.

Wordie was the Secretary of the Shackleton Memorial Fund and a great admirer of Shackleton, who was in many ways really most unlike him; his obituary of Shackleton from the Geographical Journal, reprinted in this issue of our own journal, is one of the most penetrating and appreciative pieces ever written on the leader.

The book justly commemorates Wordie’s signal achievements in exploration, in particular in bringing about the changes in style of expedition to suit a less romantic and a more scientific mechanised age. The Heroic Age is now said to have ended with the death of Shackleton on the Quest expedition in 1922. Smith claims that Wordie was the chief agent in the change of style in exploration. Wordie certainly influenced a new generation of young explorers and mountaineers. The book also covers his formidable career as an academic and an important administrator at St. John’s College, Cambridge, the Scott Polar Research Institute and the Royal Geographical Society. Wordie kept up his own polar quests, many of which he led, and visiting the ice for the last time at the age of 65.

The Wordie family were originally merchants and landowners who thought on a large scale, and who later made a really considerable fortune from haulage at the time that railways were introduced in Scotland. By the beginning of the twentieth century they owned 3,000 horses for their carts. James (‘Jock’) Wordie was born in 1889 to an intelligent and cultivated father and a mother who is thought not to have shown affection towards him. In his boyhood he loved to walk in the highlands, and at 14 he was walking in Switzerland and investigating rocks and glaciers. Wordie was a conspicuous early academic success, and his first university studies were the Geology course at Glasgow, where he gained an M.A. with distinction, and where he was taught and influenced by Professor John W. Gregory. It was, incidentally, after Gregory that the hut which he had designed for the Discovery expedition and that was put up at Hut Point was named; at first it was called ‘Gregory’s Lodge’.

Wordie proceeded to Cambridge for a second degree, in Natural Sciences, having meanwhile inherited the equivalent in today’s money of one and a half million pounds. Short, broad-shouldered and determined, ‘Jock’ became one of a few undergraduates who competed with each other in climbing the most difficult College buildings at night time, only in term time when they ran the risk of being ‘sent down’ for good, a statutory punishment for those who were caught. Raymond Priestley, the Cambridge geologist, who had been on the Nimrod and Terra Nova expeditions was a great influence on him. Wordie travelled to Canada to a geological conference and was very much taken by the Yukon during an excursion on the same trip.
Shackleton only mentions Wordie five times in *South* - just one more reference than he gave to Robert Clark and Reginald James. Shackleton apparently joined in the practical jokes against the scientists, probably an unwise piece of management. For all his deep admiration for Shackleton Wordie was critical of his handling of money and also of this ignorant contempt for science and scientists that would break out. I am not so sure that Wordie, an intensely loyal man, and so generous in his praise of Shackleton, would approve of the way that Smith gives us gratuitous subjective judgments of his own about Shackleton, such as calling him a ‘restless cavalier’ and ‘desperate’ for adventure. Wordie, on the other hand, in his obituary of Shackleton describes these elements of Shackleton’s character as worthy of Raleigh.

Wordie was ambitious to be appointed the Chief of the Scientific Staff on *Endurance*, but it was not until they were back on the mainland that Shackleton did this, authorising Wordie to publish the official scientific articles from the expedition; this he eventually did, including a particularly valuable article on the movement of ice in the Weddell Sea. The scientists on *Endurance* comprised Wordie as Geologist, Leonard Hussey as meteorologist, Robert Clark as biologist and Reginald James as physicist.

With Frank Wild, James and seventy dogs Wordie travelled to Buenos Aires on *La Negra*. At Buenos Aires he advanced Shackleton $25 for coal. Thomas Orde Lees’ judgment on Wordie was that he had ‘a most amiable temperament and a most wonderful fund of very dry humour’ and he admired his relations among the men: ‘he has no use of cliques’. Wordie’s humour is not really apparent in the diary. If he was not a very subtle psychologist, he kept a sharp eye on his fellows. When the men set off from Buenos Aires, he wrote in his diary, ‘What a difference there is to the feelings of everyone, now that we have gone to sea’, there were no more complaints and he noted that Crean and Marston began to sing at their work. When they were first beset in the ice he recorded that ‘a wave of depression seemed to come over everybody on board; it was noticed that it was best not to get in the Boss’s way’; yet Shackleton, he noticed, was the most resilient of them all. He does not express his own feelings much nor analyse his companions, as Orde Lees does. He praises certain men; he said that ‘Wild has the confidence of all hands, his reputation during the boat journey being enhanced twofold’.

Wordie was, of course, proud of his origin and took with him and displayed in his cabin a Scottish lion flag and had ready (in hopes) a sledging flag with St. Andrew’s Cross. The latter flag, made by his sister Alison, was lost to the winds the day after his birthday on Elephant Island. On *Endurance* the cabin he shared with his fellow Scot Clark was known, like Edinburgh, as ‘Auld Reekie’. Hurley’s famous photo of the floor of the ‘Ritz’ being scrubbed shows Wordie doing his bit on his knees with a good grace, together with Macklin and Alf Cheetham. On the ice there was not much for a geologist to do except to look at pebbles dragged up in the net or found in the bellies of penguins, or to examine the accumulation of mud and granules of stone in the icebergs, but he helped Clark with taking depths and testing water samples. Wordie might have hoped to be selected for the transcontinental party, but notes without comment in his log the dog-handlers appointed by Shackleton, presumably a short list for a final choice for the group: Wild, Crean, Marston, McIlroy, Macklin and Hurley. He inherited his father’s culture, noting in his diary the ‘fits of sunshine’ producing such landscapes at Cape Wild ‘as Turner would paint’.

Wordie’s Weddell Sea Log is, of course, a major acquisition to publications on the *Endurance* expedition, although the version here is abridged. As I am never tired of saying, we need proper academic editions of all the diaries, with footnotes and full texts, and certainly we do not want versions suggesting they are complete, such as the recent Orde Lees publication. The trouble with abridged versions is that one suspects that repetition and apparently trivial details might not be the only cause for suppression of passages, even if this is not the case. Also an apparently trivial piece of information to the abridging editor might be a vital clue for someone’s research. On arrival at Elephant Island Wordie wrote that eight of the men (unnamed) had broken down, while ‘the Boss is wonderful, cheering everyone and far more active than any other person in
the camp’. Orde Lees and he climbed the cliffs at Cape Valentine to prospect a safer camp, in vain, and Wordie nearly fell to his death. He adds to our knowledge: the composition of the football teams, for example. The actual game was, he tells us, pure farce, men going head over heels chasing the ball. On Elephant Island McNish cuts his hair for him, and they had Frank Wild’s Farthest South diary of 1908-9 with them. He adds to the list of songs sung by the men in the hut made from the upturned boats: Alf Cheetham sang ‘Teddy O’Neill’ and ‘False Flora’; Chippy sang ‘Robby Burns’ and ‘The March of the Cameron Men’; Wild sang ‘Ford of Kabul River’ and ‘Forty Years On’. Greenstreet cooked ‘boiled backbone and seal’s head stew’. Wordie thought the ‘forrard hands’ to be ‘very improvident’ with tobacco; as we knew already, they would wheedle some of his own cannily husbanded allowance from him with offerings of finds of stones. Wordie got blood poisoning in his hand and nearly had to have it amputated without anaesthetic. He writes in his diary at Point Wild, after scraping limpets off the rocks: ‘But can one complain? My notes are safe and every man is safe’. His stoicism is admirable; on the other hand it could called boring, in that he does not reveal enough about conditions and feelings: on some of the days when we know the men to have suffered unspeakably, Wordie writes ‘things none too cheery’, and again that the exposure in the open boats between the ice and Elephant Island was ‘none too pleasant’. Wordie was in the James Caird, and tells us that he could only sleep in the bottom of the boat on rough cases with wet feet and damp clothes from ‘being tired’. When the dramatic incident of McNish’s refusal to drag the boats further took place, Wordie noted laconically in his diary, ‘the skipper had trouble with the carpenter today whilst sledging: tonight the company assembled on the floe and ship’s articles were read’. This is certainly not the place for Wordie’s biographer at this point to castigate Shackleton for denying the Polar Medal to McNish, as he does, an issue which has become simplified in the popular mind to something of an automatic response. This was Shackleton’s decision, which we should respect, and he knew more about it than we do. It by no means indicates that he was ungrateful for McNish’s brilliant later work on the Caird and on the boots for the Crossing of South Georgia that saved all their lives; mutiny at that point on the ice could have cost the lives of all, and could not be forgiven. If there was a record of any later response of Wordie’s to this fact, which does not appear to be the case, it would of course merit mention.

Wordie was characteristically impatient with Hurley’s style in his diary - it is interesting that they passed around each others’ diaries: Wordie wrote in his own of the others’ diaries that ‘James is good, Hurley is turgid, Orde Lees is lengthy’. But the wiry prose with so little colour of Wordie’s diary can be most effective, for example the entry for 16 January 1915: ‘I shall not soon forget the sight on deck at midnight: the sun shone feebly through cloud; a strong wind was blowing; a fair amount of brash and small floes were about; and through them the ship went dodging at full speed like a yacht, the Boss working the telegraph on the bridge like a madman. Before turning in I got a glorious sight of new land, land never seen before.’ Feelings are only vaguely expressed: ‘One goes to bed in high spirits’. In common with some other members of the expedition Wordie is said to have hardly mentioned his experiences to his family. It is worrying, incidentally, that he wrote in his copy of Alfred Lansing’s book Endurance, which benefited from so many interviews with survivors, ‘inaccurate throughout’.

Smith writes an excellent clear plain narrative, but when he makes a judgment his vocabulary is annoyingly lazy and journalistic: for example, ‘flaky’ as a description of Shackleton’s brother Frank is quite inadequate and misleading; Smith calls an investment of £25,000 ‘chunky’. Worse things happen at sea, but to refer to Scott’s wife as ‘Lady Kathleen Scott’ would be to make her the daughter of a Marquess, when she was ‘Kathleen, Lady Scott’. The lack of footnotes to some important sources and quotations is very frustrating. The book needed a more thorough editing, and some rum mistakes and worse have crept into the text, such as the ‘Flincher’ Ice Shelf (presumably a spell-check computer mistake, since the Filchner Ice Shelf appears correctly marked on the map). Clark gets an ‘e’ on the end of his name on a page where his name appears correctly several times. On page 326 in the Diary we read of the sea that ‘the well had gone down’, presumably a ridiculous mistake for ‘swell’. Wordie would have been ashamed of the boring and inadequate map of Elephant Island.
On Wild’s death Wordie wrote nobly of him in the *Geographical Journal*: ‘No one was more liked and loved and his attraction, apart from his feats, lay partly in his simple and confiding nature, but also in this being the complete confidence-giving companion without fear’.

Once saved from Elephant Island and back in England Wordie lost no time, joining up to the Army within a week. At Armentières a dead horse fell on him and seriously injured his leg. This did not stop him ascending Ben Nevis on crutches when he returned to Scotland.

Wordie’s later career is fascinating and highly praiseworthy. By the age of 37 he had made 6 expeditions to the ice. With William Spiers Bruce he went to Spitzbergen to look for oil, which turned out to be futile. Smith claims that on this and a second voyage with Bruce to Spitzbergen he evolved his idea of the new style of expedition, with fewer men, six to eight, an enterprise academic rather than heroic, and also a democratic one, with scientists of equal rank and no naval hierarchy. Mechanical aids and gadgets had arrived; Smith reminds us that even the *Quest* expedition in 1922 originally set out with a monoplane and had an electrically heated crow’s nest. His men tended to be from Oxford and Cambridge and the Scottish universities.

Wordie had a great deal to do with the founding and the early years of the Scott Polar Research Institute. On national committees between the wars he was insistent in keeping the British influence in the Polar regions, and again particularly in the second world war. He did not accept Shackleton’s invitation to join the *Quest* expedition, preferring to go north to Jan Mayen island and climb the Beerenberg, an inert volcano. He wrote to Mill with advice about Shackleton’s *Quest* expedition: ‘Impress on him the need for doing any amount of oceanography; he has a very hazy idea of what it is, and hates water samples.’ Collecting water samples was, incidentally, the chore given to Shackleton on *Discovery*. On Shackleton’s death Wordie became the Secretary to the Shackleton Memorial Fund, which he appears to have carried out with great loyalty and shrewdness, resulting for one thing in the commission and the formal unveiling with speeches of the Shackleton statue by Charles Serjeant Jagger. When Wordie actually made a return visit to Elephant Island as late as 1947, he wrote to Hugh Robert Mill that he could not agree with the Captain who wanted him to give the order to land at Cape Valentine or Cape Wild: ‘I felt if I did land it should be alone, or with old comrades. So we held on, but in memory I kept that day when we landed at Cape Valentine and Shackleton had one of his great moments. It has been an unforgettable day and I know that you will share with me what I feel’.

Smith records Wordie’s family life, his Cambridge career and all his distinctions with respect, but not does right not to not conceal the comments made by Wordie’s critics of his intrigues and their methods at all the organisations. As chairman of the Himalayan committee of the Royal Geographical Society he had a great deal of influence over the selection of mountaineers, and as mentor encouraged young explorers such as Vivian Fuchs who was to carry out Shackleton’s plan of the Trans Antarctic Expedition. In 1952 Wordie became Master of St. John’s College, Cambridge, and he was knighted in 1957. This new biography tells us much we should know and of a great deal to admire about Wordie; it would have been a truly fitting tribute if it had had also the more strict attention to detail and the astringency that we feel Wordie himself had earned the right to expect.

*Jan Pizzott*
It is refreshing, always, to gain a new perspective on any aspect of the Heroic Age - no matter how modest. Stephen Haddelsey’s account of the life of Frank Bickerton is no exception.

Bickerton was, truly, a born adventurer and in many ways his sojourn over two winters in the Great White South (during Mawson’s Australian Antarctic Expedition 1911/14) was but an episode (albeit a defining one) in a remarkably eventful life spanning 65 years -and many continents.

Whilst Dr Mawson’s Home of the Blizzard is the classic account of the remarkable and fateful AAE, the unique contribution of Frank Bickerton, as described in this book, is worth noting. His pioneering experiments with an aeroplane (or, in the ice-bound actuality, hybrid air ‘tractor’) and wireless telegraphy speak for themselves. His ingenuity as a mechanical engineer proved critical to the eventual success of Mawson’s troubled expedition. Mawson acknowledged this on numerous occasions.

As with Mawson’s own account, in ‘Born Adventurer’ one is struck by the sheer malevolence of the climate facing Mawson and his men in and around Commonwealth Bay. Is it possible that Bickerton and his companions confronted weather even more severe than that faced by Captain Scott on the Ross Ice Shelf? It would appear, yes! Ferocious winds and blizzards welded, almost seamlessly, one day and night to another. Calm days were shocking in their serenity. It is to Bickerton’s credit that, without exception, he laboured tirelessly with his appointed tasks, often alone or with one or two other hardies.

A complete ice-travel novice at the outset of his polar adventure, Bickerton was chosen by Mawson to be leader of the Western Sledge Party. With barely any training (and with damaged equipment) the mechanical engineer somehow led his small team an astonishing distance of 161 miles in the face of appalling odds. In such circumstances it beggars belief that all three travellers managed to return to Base Camp without serious mishap. Contrast this with the fate of his leader, Mawson, who (with two companions also) only just managed to return to the hut from his Far Eastern journey but without Ninnis and Mertz who had perished in the pursuit of discovery.

In this account of the AAE, Dr Mawson emerges as a rather unsmiling, almost condescending, leader. Mawson was a professional scientist who barely managed to accommodate the unscientific and even amateur approach of most of his team members. Bickerton’s relationship with the Doctor oscillated. Given the cross-section of men and the severity of their conditions it is hardly surprising that tensions mounted. It is gratifying to note, however, that long after the Expedition, Bickerton & Mawson would meet occasionally and exchange letters. Undoubtedly, Bickerton held his leader in great esteem and rightly so.

Life after Antarctica proved far from dull for Frank Bickerton. It was packed full of adventures both geographical and commercial. He was often surrounded by a panoply of friends but, paradoxically, he became emotionally isolated and unfulfilled. He saw out two world wars, mostly on active duty. He was fearless and prone to high jinks. He was a true daredevil on occasions. Sadly, a serious accident caused some disfigurement of his handsome features but this doesn’t seem to have lessened the admiration of women.

Initially blessed with a useful private income, Bickerton embraced a raft of adventures. These ranged from treasure hunting, to flying, to farming (in Newfoundland), to socialising in Roaring Twenties’ London, to real estate development (California) and to chaperoning two young Etonians around half the globe attempting, in the process, a complete journey overland through Africa. Truly, here is a man of action and no little spirit!
Without question, it is Bickerton’s pioneering and robust involvement in the polar regions that will interest and impress the reader most. Even so, it is poignant to discern that, for all his unquestionable talents and courage, Frank Bickerton was a man with a restless soul. He was a man who, in the final analysis, could not settle to a single task for very long. He was not fully ‘at home’ either in the hubbub and excitement of the city or in the peace and tranquility of the great outdoors. He was a man without a mate. Without a mate, he lacked balance. He lacked true fulfilment. And here is the rub. This remarkable man’s man had a heart that could be broken just as easily as anyone else on this planet. He was affected deeply by lost love. He was a man who, in his polar prime, ‘sobbed’ under his blanket at the loss of his dear friends Ninnis and Mertz, beloved members of Hyde Park Corner, Commonwealth Bay, Antarctica. To discover the soul of ‘Born Adventurer’ is to discover the soul of Frank Bickerton.

Stephen Scott-Fawcett


by Hadoram Shirihai; illustrated by Brett Jarrett; edited by Guy Kirwan. 2002. Alula Press, Finland. 510 pages. 35 colour plates, 492 colour photographs, 158 maps, several figures and tables. Hardback, £40.00.

The Antarctic continent and the Southern Ocean together constitute a huge part of the globe and a true wilderness. Although isolated and inhospitable, with an unpredictable and unforgiving climate, and with much of the region inaccessible to man, they are home to animals which are among the most interesting and highly adapted on earth. It is a dream destination for many researchers and amateur naturalists.

This remarkable book is a must for any birder or naturalist visiting any part of the Antarctic continent or the surrounding Southern Ocean. For the first time within one book, we have a field guide, a site guide and a guidebook to the birds and marine mammals of the whole of this vast area. Lavishly illustrated with excellent colour plates, superb colour photographs and detailed distribution and location maps, it is the outcome of an enormous consultation exercise with many of the world’s foremost experts on the region who have contributed extensively to the text and provided many of the stunning photographs.

Hadoram Shirihai deserves great praise for co-ordinating the gathering of this mass of data and material, as does Guy Kirwan for editing it into a single volume which is sufficiently compact to be taken on a trip to the far south (although heavy enough to threaten your baggage allowance). Both are unstinting in their praise for all the many referees, researchers, contributors, photographers, sponsors and friends who have helped in the guide’s preparation. It is an impressive achievement. It was indirectly born of the tubenose monograph on which Hadoram has been working with John Warham and Vincent Bretagnolle, when shortly after commencing field work in the Southern Ocean he found, like so many before him, that he had become hooked on the region and its unique wildlife.

He also discovered very quickly that some of the conservation issues facing the Southern Ocean are among the most acute and damaging faced by bird populations anywhere on the planet, especially the slaughter of seabirds caused by the comparatively recent advent of longline fishing. Consequently conservation is a particularly strong theme of the book.

Much of the author’s knowledge and experience of wildlife in the subantarctic islands south of New Zealand and in the Ross Sea was gained by working with Rodney Russ, founder of Heritage...
Expeditions, and with whom he prepared the special seabird issue of Alula in the summer of 2000 (Volume 6 - 3/2000). Their joint paper on ‘The birds, marine mammals, habitat and history of the subantarctic islands of New Zealand’ became the basis for two of the regional chapters in this guide. The paper was widely praised for, *inter alia*, the remarkable quality of reproduction of the superb seabird photographs. A new publishing company, Alula Press, was established by the Finnish team, solely to publish this book.

It was John Warham who realised the exceptional talent of Brett Jarrett as both a gifted wildlife artist and great co-worker. Brett’s clear, uncluttered illustrations depict the identification features of both birds and marine mammals with equal accuracy and fidelity, an unusual talent in one artist. Particularly helpful are the identification captions and comments against almost every image on each bird plate, drawing attention to key features to assist the separation of confusion species. There are plenty of these in the region - the gadfly petrels, diving petrels and the almost indistinguishable prions, let alone the controversial splits among the skuas and albatrosses! In the case of the marine mammals, identification notes are to be found on the page opposite each plate, together with smaller illustrations to show the characteristic head, fin and tail shapes. The co-operation with the Alula team has resulted in a production of the very highest quality. The reproduction of the colour plates and the magnificent series of photographs is superb. From breathtaking close-ups of seabirds and marine mammals which illustrate identification features, to beautiful shots of spectacular icebergs, mountains and glaciers which give an appreciation of the character of the continent, the images could not be bettered. The maps for both locations and distribution are clear and uncluttered.

The book is divided into three parts. The first provides an introduction to the region, describing its general characteristics and emphasising its marine, climatic and zoological environments. Coupled with this are descriptions of geology and habitat; background information to the region’s birds and marine mammals; resumes of our knowledge of these groups; the past, present and future of conservation; and a section outlining the human history of the region. It aims to provide naturalists with an accurate synthesis of our current knowledge of these issues. The aim is convincingly met in 40 well-illustrated and well-laid-out pages.

Particularly important is the conservation section, which describes ‘the burning issue’ of threatened species and the need to take both land-based and ocean-based action to redress and curb Man’s excesses. ‘Seabirds on the hook’ and ‘Saving the seabirds’ are very important sections which highlight the need for urgent action to reduce the ‘bycatch’ of seabirds on baited hooks during longlining fishing. Up to 60 seabird species have been reported as caught and killed by these operations, and BirdLife International, which is spearheading a conservation campaign to reduce this avoidable mortality, estimates that 26 species of albatross and petrel, most of them Southern Ocean breeders, are globally threatened.

The second part of the guide, occupying just over 300 pages, is devoted to species accounts and plates, with birds followed by marine mammals. All breeding and otherwise important species found in the region are included. The accounts provide good detailed, accurate and up-to-date discussions of identification issues, plumage and, in some cases, moult, as well as an introduction to the general biology (including breeding), populations, conservation and taxonomy of each. Species accounts and plates are arranged by family/genus, similar species, or regional groupings, but also endeavour to retain (as far as possible within the constraints of such an approach) conventional systematic order.

A cautious approach has been taken over seabird taxonomic changes which are currently hotly debated and still controversial, especially with albatrosses and skuas. The author acknowledges the various forms which have been recognised but (perhaps wisely) has not actually split them. Part of the problem is that field identification of many forms is still very difficult, and he regards the information he presents as part of the continuing attempts to bring human order to some of the groups concerned.
The third main section of the guide describes the different island groups of the Southern Ocean and regions of the Antarctic continent. It concentrates on the principal ones such as the South Shetlands and the subantarctic islands in the Indian Ocean and south of New Zealand, but also includes the Falklands, Tristan da Cunha, Gough and Amsterdam, which are not usually covered by works on the subantarctic. This is very useful for naturalists, especially birders who may visit these islands as part of expeditions and cruises to other parts of the region. Comprehensive details for each island group are given on climate, geology, vegetation, birds, marine mammals, nature conservation, human history and visiting arrangements. Within the constraints of space, the pages on ‘Gateways to the Antarctic’ from South America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand are a helpful introduction to access to the major areas of interest to naturalists and birders.

Hadoram’s rationale in compiling this guide is that with increasing research and interest in the conservation of many of the region’s species, as well as the growth in eco-tourism to this remote area, there was a need for an up-to-date and modern-style field guide to both birds and marine mammals. He expresses the hope that the book will stimulate even greater interest in this remaining wilderness, and serve as a baseline for further interesting discoveries in the region. Man’s record of exploitation and plundering in and around Antarctica, from almost exterminating the great whales in the last century to potentially exterminating the great albatrosses in this, is an appalling one. If, as he hopes, this book will play a role in safeguarding the Antarctic continent and Southern Ocean from the further ravages of mankind, we will be eternally grateful.

Tony Marr

‘The Lost Men’ by Kelly Tyler-Lewis,

Just as you thought Shackleton’s *Endurance* expedition had clutched success out of the jaws of failure in the Weddell Sea we are reminded by Kelly Tyler-Lewis that, thousands of miles away in the Ross Sea region, a party of men (commissioned by the Boss to lay essential depots across the Ross Ice Barrier to the foot of the Beardmore Glacier) endured extreme hardship and even death, in support of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition.

It is an extraordinary and exhausting story. It is a story of sheer guts and determination (principally and variably on the part of Æneas Mackintosh and Ernest Wild) against all the odds. It is a story, too, of disagreement and under-funding. Here, perhaps, we have a counter-weight to the Weddell Sea saga. Unlike Shackleton’s failure to attain his main objective of crossing the Antarctic continent (indeed, he didn’t even make landfall), the Ross Sea Party *succeeded* in laying the supply depots (critical to ensure Shackleton’s safe passage across the final leg of his proposed journey). Despite this, 3 men perished (arguably needlessly) and, in the final analysis, the stranded party of blubber-stained and mentally-strained survivors had to be rescued, courtesy of a mercy dash by the *Aurora* from New Zealand with John King Davis at the helm. Shackleton was on board, too, but for political reasons entirely, the hero of the Elephant Island rescue, on his first voyage on board his own vessel, was reduced to the role of supernumerary officer. There is a poignant photograph of Shackleton standing on the deck of the *Aurora* in Wellington, NZ, after the relief expedition (1917). It shows a man deep in thought - a man probably mourning the loss of 3 good men. A man contemplating the remarkable achievements and sacrifices of 10 beleagured men who risked their lives on a daily basis, in foreboding circumstances, to ensure that he, Shackleton, might succeed. Little did they realise that the Boss would never appear over the horizon, not in 1915 nor 1916.

What is significant about Kelly Tyler-Lewis’s book, I think, is the attention to detail and the objective way in which the many difficulties of logistics and relationships are explained.
From the very outset of the journey south, problems accumulated. There was a chronic lack of manpower (many eligible men were in France fighting the Germans). Some of those who were recruited seemed unsuited to the icy task ahead. There was very little cohesion. There was, also, a clash of cultures. The Australian contingent would challenge often the decisions of their superiors, much to the embarrassment of the Europeans. Whilst the experienced Ernest Joyce was always the reluctant rod-bearer, he anguished, often, with the decisions of his leader, Æneas Mackintosh – not least when (ignoring Joyce’s protests) the latter decided to push the dog teams too hard in the first season of depot-laying. It was a fateful strategy with only 6 dogs surviving through to 1916. Joyce was livid.

Upon arrival in New Zealand it fell to Mackintosh to get the *Aurora* ship-shape and fully supplied. Shackleton hadn’t planned it through. His focus was on the Weddell Sea operation. Furthermore, there was very little funding available (unsurprising given the advent of the Great War). Time and time again, pleas by Mackintosh to the Expedition’s London-based lawyers for more funds would go unanswered – ‘the wartime economy is to blame’, they would finally reply. On many occasions the private savings of Shackleton’s men would save the day – Stenhouse being a classic example. The story of how Stenhouse wrestled with the *Aurora* over hundreds of miles, through the pack ice, when a giant storm blew it from its moorings at Cape Evans is remarkable and probably worthy of a book itself. That Stenhouse finally made it back to New Zealand then had the wherewithal to get the ship repaired and re-stocked for a relief journey is truly remarkable.

Throughout the entire expedition (on board and on shore) the men never really united together. There were always cliques and intrigue. Most often the men were split between following Mackintosh’s lead or that of Joyce. Feelings ran high on many occasions. Still, the status quo just about remained. In many ways, whilst Joyce took control of the later stages of the second depot-laying season to the foot of the Beardmore Glacier (as Mackintosh’s health gave way), Joyce never assumed full command - it only became a necessity when, finally, Mackintosh and Hayward attempted a suicidal crossing over young ice (and ahead of a brewing storm) from Hut Point to Cape Evans, *after* the depot-laying journeys had been completed successfully. As if to emphasise the fraught relationships, the disappearance and certain death of the two men (Spencer-Smith had died earlier, on the Barrier) simply caused anger rather than a sense of loss. For the 7 men still clinging on in the shanty hut of Hut Point, the decision by Mackintosh (and Hayward) to attempt a crossing to the better-equipped hut at Cape Evans was foolhardy - especially given the huge effort it had taken to transport the two ailing men back to camp. As far as the survivors were concerned, it might have been better for Mackintosh and Hayward to have gambled (and lost) their lives earlier, on the depot journey home. At least the survivors might have stood a greater chance of saving the chaplain’s life! Of the shore party, Spencer-Smith was the most liked by all.

I commend this well-written book to anyone who is keen to get ‘close’ to the harsh realities of Heroic Era polar travelling albeit from the comfort of an armchair! *The Lost Men* pulls no punches. It tells it how it really was; the ups and the many downs. Above all, it gives us an important insight into a part of the *Endurance* Expedition that is so often overlooked and probably undervalued these days. Thanks to the author’s tireless research and her refreshingly frank and balanced approach, the saga of the *Aurora* commands our attention. Her heroes demand recognition today, as they deserved and, to a certain degree, received in their time. Shackleton was so inspired by what the Ross Sea Party had achieved that he made sure these heroes, his men, received the full pay they were due, even bonuses (unlike their counterparts on *Endurance*). All (bar two troublesome crew members) were awarded the Polar Medal (Joyce, Richards, Wild and Hayward) eventually securing, also, an Albert Medal, in 1923).

*Stephen Scott-Fawcett*
CATALOGUE - POSTMARKS of the
AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC TERRITORY 1911 -2004
by Colleen A Woollev and Janet S. Eurv. published by Australian PictorMarks ®.

The general theme of such a publication would seem out of the mainstream for a Society
dedicated to the exploits of an ‘Heroic Age’ Antarctic explorer such as Sir Ernest H Shackleton.

However, it is worth a look as first it covers the association with Sir Douglas Mawson, one of
the team to first reach the magnetic South Pole with the ‘NIMROD’ 1907-09 Expedition of Sir
Ernest. Mawson went on to lead 2 of his own explorations. Also later you can find stamps and
their cancels / cachets relating to the AAT issues showing Sir Douglas. Many other Australian
associated people, wildlife and events are similarly covered.

In addition, many people today collect items, not least stamps and envelopes, on a ‘themed
basis’ and this book would help anyone interested in such a task, not only with the above
connection, but also its use of commemorative cancels and cachets on envelopes.

Of special interest then are Chapter 1, which lists the early expeditions including the ‘classics’
, with exciting illustrations of actual mail, and for those of pecuniary interest, an estimate of
values, when you can find one! The later information comprehensively covers the
commemoration of the early exploits with Frank Hurley and Hut Restoration shown as well.

Chapter 7 specialises in ‘MAWSON BASE’. Naturally, it is focussed on the AAT bases, but the
wide ranging data and profuse illustration, with a very informative and easy style of text (and
interesting content!) to read make this more than just a ‘Postmark’ catalogue. You may also
find the cute penguin logo, scattered throughout, which presages titbits of information, useful
and fun!

If you have or are looking for a wider interest in the Antarctic, have visited and wonder whence
now, try this book for ideas. Without getting stuck on technicalities, it is ring bound with soft
card / glassine covers. Presumably it could be disbound on the proper machine which I have
seen in photocopy shops, and amendments or addenda put in later as issued?

There is a fair reference list of publications, further sources, Philatelic Societies to join, spread
sheet of issued stamps/postmarks and a Map of Antarctica. A small quibble on this - could it
not show the early expedition routes with Australian content - not that many!

It is available in the UK via Geoffrey Barber, PO BOX 29137, 9 Ross Avenue, Dalgety Bay,
Dunfermline KY11 9YN email: antarctic@barberg60.fsnet.co.uk
AND Australia via Peter Cranwell, PO BOX 620, ROSSANNA VICTORIA 3084,
AUSTRALIA, EMAIL pcranwell@optushome.com.au, tel. +61 3 9459 6720.
Price about £14 plus post - please ask the above for orders.

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Wall plaque at Shackleton House, Holt, Norfolk – Winter 2005